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# CAN WE THEN BELIEVE?

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# CAN WE THEN BELIEVE?

SUMMARY OF VOLUMES ON "RECONSTRUCTION OF BELIEF" AND REPLY TO CRITICISMS

BY CHARLES GORE, D.D.

HON. D.D. EDINBURGH AND DURHAM, HON. D.C.L. OXFORD, HON. LL.D. CAMBRIDGE AND BIRMINGHAM, PH.D. ATHENS, HON. FELLOW OF BALLIOL AND TRINITY COLLEGES, OXFORD, AND FELLOW OF KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON

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# PREFACE

In the preface to the first volume of a series of three on *The Reconstruction of Belief*, published in 1921, I said that 'if the critics take notice of me and argue against my conclusions, I propose to issue a fourth volume of dissertations and discussions, in order to expand, buttress, or modify arguments and conclusions.' I have had in effect the opportunity of reading a large number of press notices, longer or shorter, and notices in other men's books, of the three volumes hitherto published—*Belief in God*, *Belief in Christ*, and *The Holy Spirit and the Church*—and I have to thank some of my friends for searching criticisms in private letters. Besides that, since I wrote my books a number of works by different authors have come out, or been read by me, bearing on the subjects I had endeavoured to treat. Among such I would name J. E. Turner's *Theory of Direct Realism*, Collingwood's *Speculum Mentis*, and H. E. Thomas's *Non-Rational Character of Faith* on the philosophical question; E. W. Hobson's *Domain of Natural Science* and the composite volumes

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*Evolution in the Light of Modern Knowledge* and *Science, Religion, and Reality* on the relation of religion to science; Eduard Meyer's three volumes on *Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums* with Streeter's *Four Gospels*, Klausner's *Jesus of Nazareth*, Charnwood's *According to St. John*, and Headlam's *Jesus Christ in History and Faith* on the historical question; Walter Scott's *Hermetica* and E. F. Scott's *Spirit in the New Testament* on the relation of the earliest Christian tradition to Hellenism; William Temple's *Christus Veritas*, E. J. Bicknell's *Christian Idea of Sin and Original Sin*, Peter Green's *Problem of Evil*, and Harrison's *Problem of the Pastoral Epistles* on particular points of theology or criticism. These and the like books, as well as the criticisms public or private on what I had written, have given me cause to rethink my conclusions and my methods in the light of other men's thought.

I have not been led by reading the books of other men or their criticisms of my own books to alter any of the main conclusions which I had expressed; indeed, the books I have mentioned, bearing on the questions of historical evidence and the origins of Christian theology and sacramentalism, have served decidedly to strengthen them. But some criticisms—such as Dr. William Temple's that 'the prophets

of Israel cannot be made to bear the weight that I had laid on them,'[1] or Dr. Percy Gardner's that 'history is not [my] strong point'[2]—which, though they were only made in passing, are, I dare say, typical criticisms, and another criticism, in the opposite sense to Dr. Gardner's, that I was too strongly and exclusively historical and did not give weight enough to consideration of spiritual or mystical experience[3]—such criticisms led me to desire to make a restatement of some of the main positions of my books in the hope of ridding from misunderstandings the conception I hold of the relation of the specific Christian revelation to the human reason generally and to present-day science; and also making it clear what are the claims made on behalf of critical history which I believe to be unjustified; and how, in my judgement, the position now stands as regards historical evidence. Also the constantly renewed attempt to detach from Christ the Catholic idea of the Church and the sacraments, and to attach it, through St. Paul's influence, to pagan Hellenism—an attempt which I believe to be strangely contrary to the

[1] See *Christus Veritas*, p. 175, n. 2.

[2] See *Modern Churchman*, September 25, p. 454; cf. Dr. Inge's and Dr. Peake's complaint that I take too optimistic a view of the results of N.T. criticism.

[3] Dr. Spens and others; see E. C. Selwyn's *Approach to Christianity*, p. 245.

evidence—required some further notice. Accordingly, having agreed to deliver the White Lectures in St. Paul's Cathedral during this past Lent, I devoted those lectures to such a restatement—under the title of 'Reasonable Apprehensions and Reassurances'—and those six lectures occupy the greater part of the present volume.

Criticism of another kind on my philosophy, or the lack of it, from Dr. Inge and others, and, what is more important than criticisms of me, criticism of the theology of the Creeds and Councils as formulated in terms of a superannuated and abandoned philosophy, which are made (though respectfully made) by Dr. Mackintosh, and are more or less supported by Dr. Temple, have led me, perhaps overboldly, to follow up my lectures by an essay on *Religion, Theology, and Philosophy*.

I have hitherto been referring to criticisms upon my books covering their general substance and arguments. But I have also received some severe criticisms on the style of my books, and on particular 'appended notes,' which I accept with shame as wholly just. In the next issue of the books a number of intolerably cumbrous sentences shall be broken up. Also a number of notes, some of which were not really needed at all by the course of the argument, I recognize as deserving to be called

'scrappy' or 'inadequate,' and they have been rewritten, and, for the benefit of those who have already got the previous volumes, they are printed in this volume, among a large number of Additional Notes, some of them substitutes for previous notes which have been justly criticized, and some of them wholly new. A list of them is given in the Table of Contents which follows this preface, and they will be seen to cover a large number of points under discussion at the present day. I have also been allowed to incorporate portions of a private letter from the Rev. G. H. Whitaker on the meaning of 'Paraclete,' written in correction of that I had written and gratefully assimilated.

There is another criticism made upon my books which, on re-reading them, I acknowledge as just and which I desire to meet—that I am too fond of the use of the words 'certain' or 'quite certain' or their equivalents. I acknowledge that in a number of places I should have written 'more probable' or 'much more probable.' I recognize, of course, that in questions of historical criticism —and it was to conclusions reached by me on such questions that these critics referred—absolute certainty is rarely attainable. There is almost always 'something to be said' on the other side, and we have to be content with

accepting the most probable of various conclusions suggested. But in accepting this correction, I should wish to guard myself by the reminder that in history 'probability is the very guide' of knowledge as it is of practical life; and, when a historical or scientific conclusion has any bearing on life or conduct, there rests upon us the duty of decision in accordance with the real weight of the evidence, even though it never amounts to demonstration. It is in the same sense our duty not to abandon any established position, by whomsoever denied or however fashionable the denial, unless we become ourselves convinced that the evidence against it is on the whole stronger than the grounds for believing it. It is provisional intellectual decisions, based on a complex of greater probabilities, which in religious matters, when 'put to account' in life, become practical certitudes or elements in the conviction of faith.

My three volumes, to which this is supplementary, are intended to build up consecutively a structure of positive belief, based on rational grounds, in God, in Christ, in the Holy Spirit, and in the visible Church as the organ of Christ by the Spirit. It must be obvious that any attempt to do so great a thing in so small a compass must exclude the *full* treatment of any single stage in the argument.

If I had said all I should wish to say at each stage, the volumes would have been many more than three. I think some of my critics have forgotten this. Also they have sometimes forgotten that I was writing for the ordinary educated man rather than the professed scholar; and I may thankfully say that it is from the ordinary educated man that I have in many cases got my reward. I do from my heart desire to press upon serious and conscientious men generally that they must not allow the Christian religion to lose its power upon themselves or upon others because in their surroundings they find it to be fashionable to decry its evidences and even to treat it, in its concrete form, with intellectual contempt. Its grounds in history and experience are in fact very strong; and it is the bounden duty of every man of education to refuse to be deluded by the weight of a fashionable opinion, when he has the chance of some real measure of actual knowledge. He is bound to judge for himself and to make up his own mind.

I would ask those who read the six lectures in this volume to remember that they are summary restatements of conclusions of which the grounds are stated in the previous volumes much more fully.

I have been disappointed to find that com-

paratively very little notice has been taken of the argument about authority in religion which occupies the greater part of the third volume, and none at all of what I have called 'The Test of Rational Coherence.' I know, of course, that the idea which I have been led to formulate of the place and nature of authority in the Christian religion is not exactly in accordance with the dominant tradition among Roman Catholics or Free Churchmen or Modernists or Evangelicals; nor is it agreeable to a good many of those who would, like myself, call themselves Anglo-Catholics; nevertheless, I venture to think it deserves consideration; and there is no subject to which I think it is more necessary to give fresh and untrammelled consideration to-day than this of authority in religion. I was specially disappointed to find so little consideration given to these chapters of mine by my fellow Anglo-Catholics, because they had noted with some suspicion that I had ignored authority in the earlier volumes, where indeed it would have been logically quite out of place.

I have lately been reading the interesting life of Marcel Hébert by Albert Houtin.[1] It is the story of 'un prêtre symboliste' of Paris, who was ejected against his will from the

[1] Paris; edd. F. Rieder et Cie, 1925.

exercise of his priesthood on account of modernist opinions, and finally by his own will abandoned the Church completely. The account of his final state of mind, both as given by M. Houtin and in the appendix[1] by M. Félix Sartiaux, seems to me to provide a sort of summary of the conception of God which a man of to-day would naturally arrive at who had studied science and contemporary philosophy, and whose attention had either never been caught by the idea of divine revelation and of the Christian revelation in particular, or who had so far revolted from the idea as to be able to ignore it. It is more or less exactly the state of mind which I tried to describe in my first volume.[2] Of course one who, like M. Hébert, had come to anchor upon it after knowing and abandoning the faith of the Church, must be supposed to have rejected the idea of divine revelation as rationally intolerable. But if I abstract his final state of mind from his personal experience and consider it in itself, I find it, as a position, full of difficulty. I cannot conceive that it could be permanent or general among men. As M. Sartiaux notes, after having abandoned the doctrine of a personal God as anthropomorphic, Hébert suggests a return to it on moral grounds. If I were in his position, I

[1] pp. 284 ff. [2] *Belief in God*, chap. iii.

feel that I should be constantly thinking that a personal God, such as could disclose Himself to man, is at least a possible conception; and that, if such exists whose mind towards man is good, that He should have in fact disclosed Himself is at least probable; nor, if this point is reached, can I conceive anyone studying the spiritual experiences of mankind, in their higher reaches, without feeling that there is widespread evidence of such divine self-disclosure; nor, when this further point is reached, can I imagine that he would easily resist the impression that such revelation is specially apparent in the line of the Jewish prophets and in Jesus Christ. That is, in effect, the argument on which my three books are based.

I will try to put the position in another way. I find it hard to believe that anyone, who has at present no glimpse of a divine self-disclosure, could steadily contemplate the world and humanity in the mass and find there the evidence that God is love, or even, short of that, that the purpose of the universe as a whole is good. But equally I cannot imagine that he could concentrate his attention upon the higher reaches of human development without wondering whether, after all, it must not be so. But such a state of wonder or expectation is already a predisposition to be a Christian.

It must make a man profoundly interested in the Christian 'evidences' and in the self-witness of Christ. I cannot understand anyone who dares face the facts of the universe really believing that God—the creator and sustaining energy of the universe as a whole—is wholly good, until he has come to believe that God's real character is finally to be found in Jesus Christ; but I cannot imagine anyone even setting out upon the road towards this discovery, who did not feel that, even if the verdict of the universe upon God's character be profoundly perplexing, yet there is that in it which is for ever suggesting that the root or ground of all must be good.

That is the starting-point of the arguments which I have tried to put afresh in the following lectures.

C. G.

*Lent*, 1926.

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## THE WHITE LECTURES (1926)

Dr. Thomas White, Vicar of St. Dunstan's-in-the-West, London, whose will was dated February 20, 1622, left a bequest to the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's for the endowment of a lectureship in the cathedral. Under an Order of the Charity Commissioners, given about fifty years ago, the conditions of the bequest were altered and the income was used for the remuneration of Lent mid-day preachers under the dome. In 1925 these daily mid-day addresses were suspended, and in their place the Dean and Chapter decided to revive the title and idea of the White Lectureship, and to have one lecturer giving each Lent a systematic course of six lectures on Wednesday evenings on some subject of practical or doctrinal theology.

# CAN WE THEN BELIEVE?

## LECTURE I

## OUR NEED OF A CORPORATE FAITH IN GOD, AND THE FAITH OF THE BIBLE

**Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.—Rom. xv. 4 (A.V.).**

So our old English Bible translates St. Paul. But, inasmuch as by his use of the definite article St. Paul suggests that he is speaking not of *any* kind of patience and comfort, nor of any kind of hope, but of a specific kind,[1] I should prefer to represent his words thus: 'Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that, through the endurance and through the encouragement of the scriptures, we might hold the hope'—that hope for humanity, for the redemption of all men in a common fellowship, of which

[1] On the force of the definite article, see A. T. Robertson's *Grammar of N.T. Greek*, pp. 756, 758; and on its absence, p. 790.

St. Paul is speaking. He is referring of course only to the Old Testament Scriptures, but what he says is quite as obviously true of the New as of the Old. And we do well to observe how he recurs at the end of the passage whence the text is taken to the necessity of holding fast the characteristic Christian hope. 'Now the God of the hope (our Christian hope) fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in the hope in the power of Holy Spirit.' The hope is rooted in the belief and the belief generates the hope.

And to these words of St. Paul I would add two texts of St. Peter[1] from his glorious epistle of hope, the one where he is bidding the Christians be 'ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you,' and the other where he suggests what the reason must be which they are to render to those who question them, affirming that the end for which Christ was manifested and shed His blood and was raised from the dead and glorified was nothing else than this—'that your faith and hope might be in God.' St. Peter plainly means that the characteristic of the Christian is to face the present and the future—however dark it may be—with a radiant and undaunted hope; and, when he is asked to give a rational

[1] 1 Pet. iii. 15 and i. 21.

account of his hopefulness, to find it in the new vision of God, His character, His purpose, and His power, which the teaching, the crucifixion, the resurrection, and the glory of Christ have fixed in his mind as certain truth.

There is a singular fascination in the history of the early Church—all through the days when constant slander and isolation, and recurrent persecution, made it dangerous to become a Christian, and thus the moral level of Christianity was kept relatively very high. The fascination lies in the spectacle of a widespreading community gradually winning its way over enormous obstacles in the power of an unconquerable hope, and vigorously reforming the life of men in this world, while the secret of its confidence lay in the world beyond. Nothing could daunt it, not even the threatened approach of the ultimate catastrophe—the end of the world—for that only suggested 'the coming'; and their Lord had bidden His first Jewish disciples, in immediate prospect of final disaster to their temple and nation, to 'look up and lift up their heads, for their redemption was drawing nigh.'[1] The 'coming,' or second coming, of the Lord the first Christians expected immediately; but this immediate expectation, which proved illusory, and all their glorious belief in another

[1] Luke xxi. 28.

world which was to right the injustices of this one, did not make them other-worldly with the disastrous individualism of later Christianity. Oh no! They stood before the world as the brotherhood of the redeemed, the brotherhood which recognized no barriers of sex or class or race or colour, which honoured all men, however despised and however deeply fallen, because all men were capable of sonship to God in the power of the great redemption—a brotherhood moreover which understood that new word in a very concrete and practical sense, and had developed what we may call a political economy of its own, embodying the maxim 'from each according to his capacity and to each according to his need.' Such being the character of the Christian Church, we can watch it going out into a world increasingly stricken with despondency and fear, only variegated, and not really relieved, by the hunt for the pleasures of a corrupt civilization—a world over which brooded the terrors of fate and the power of evil spirits and the sense of the pollution of physical life [1]; and in such a world the Gospel of redemption, actually visible in the Christian community, was a Gospel indeed, such as none of 'the mysteries' of pagan worship proved to be able to rival.

[1] *Belief in Christ*, pp. 13 f., 263, 269.

Those of us who love Walter Pater's *Marius the Epicurean* will remember what Marius, still a pagan, discerned in his Christian friend Cornelius—that 'a new hope had sprung up in the world, of which he, Cornelius, was a depository, which he was to bear onward in it.' 'There had been a permanent protest established in the world, a plea . . . which humanity henceforth would ever possess in reserve against any mechanical and disheartening theory of itself and its conditions.'

It ought to be so to-day. We too are living in a period of disillusionment and discouragement, often passing into a selfish and pleasure-hunting cynicism. And it is impossible to deny that the prospect, whether for our own country or for the world, is, though not without qualification, cloudy and gloomy. It is easy enough to be a pessimist and prognosticate the suicide of our civilization. But it is precisely in such a period that the Christian Church ought to have its opportunity. Suffer yourselves for a moment to dream dreams. Suppose there were before men's eyes everywhere a Church of the believers in Christ which, while very far from perfect, did still present a tolerable image of 'the body of Christ' as St. Paul conceives it, His visible organ in the world, inspired by His Spirit. Suppose one could see a vigorous supernational

fellowship of men, owning real allegiance to Christ, and while obviously imperfect, yet habitually ready to make sacrifices of their money interests or their pleasure for His name, really practising brotherhood, really standing effectively for justice and love in all the relations of the strong to the weak—the sort of Church from which those who plainly prefer Mammon to Christ, and selfishness to service, would find themselves excommunicated or self-excommunicated, just as now for the most part ' notorious evil livers ' (those whom alone we recognize as such) do find themselves. Suppose men saw such a Church radiant with a supernatural hope which yet left them intently occupied in building the Kingdom of God in this world—I say, suppose all this, and you can imagine the effect. Though the members of such a Church did not number one-tenth part of the total of professing Christians to-day, what an influence it would have ! How inevitably men would understand what the Church in this world is for !

It is a very different sight which in fact men see to-day. The miserable and inveterate divisions of the Church ; all that has made the Church of England or of France or of Germany or of the Balkan States rather a stimulus to the narrower patriotism than the instrument of international unity ; all the

selfish individualism of religion which has made the mass of our communicants so indifferent to the great cause of justice and brotherhood among men; all that has made men reckon as 'ecclesiastical questions' things quite other than 'righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost'—all this lamentable spectacle has blinded men's eyes to the true mission of the Church. We need within the Church a new standard of aims and values more in conformity with the spirit of Christ. And that can only come about through the conversion and enlightenment of individuals and groups—for mass conversion does not really occur—till from such keen centres of recovered consciousness of the Church's true mission the whole body is invigorated and the light shines broadly again.

Such a conversion and re-enlightenment of individuals and groups is indeed proceeding—if not in all countries, certainly in ours. But it finds one constant hindrance. The great hope for humanity which inspires the Christian Church is based on a very confident faith, as St. Paul and St. Peter hold and proclaim very clearly. But in our days those who are inspired by the 'enthusiasm of humanity,' which is properly Christian—which came into the world with the preaching of Christ, and would, we are bound to suppose, dwindle and

die if its grounds were undermined—such people in sadly many cases are lacking in the decisive faith. This is true of so many of the best men and women—who, we feel, would assuredly have been among the disciples of Jesus, if they had lived in Palestine in 'the days of His flesh.' They are rightly anxious not to be obscurantists, but to live in the light of modern knowledge. They know, or they have heard, that the greater number of our philosophers hold a conception of God very different from the Christian conception. They have an uncomfortable feeling that physical science has not only substituted a wholly different conception of the universe for that which formed the intellectual background of early Christian thought, but has also by its all-embracing category of evolution, and its accompanying conception of human origins, destroyed the traditional belief about our first parents and the fall of man, which has been a very important element alike in Catholic and Protestant orthodoxy; and, more than all, they have imbibed from modern 'critical' literature the idea that historical science has largely invalidated the grounds of the Christian tradition about Jesus, and especially the belief in miracles. They also gather that historical science is pointing to Paul, and not to Jesus, as the originator of the catholic conception of

the Church and the sacraments, a conception which, it is suggested, was derived in reality from the pagan ' mystery cults ' of the Roman Empire. All these and the like suspicions coalesce in the minds of many good and serious people with a profound dissatisfaction with the Church as they see it, and a revolt from what is called ' institutionalism,' so as to generate a widespread scepticism concerning the whole fabric of traditional Christianity, and that, I say, among a large proportion of the morally best and most serious men and women.

I suppose that you to whom I am speaking, almost without exception, if not yourselves deeply conscious of these sceptical suspicions or convictions, are at least keenly alive to their possession of the minds of some whom you love and reverence, and whom you find thereby practically alienated or half-alienated from the fellowship of the Church and from the activities of specifically Christian endeavour.

Now, these sceptical convictions and suspicions of which I have been speaking are grounded on an indisputable fact—the fact, I mean, that the traditional orthodoxy of a hundred years ago has since the middle of the last century been receiving a succession of the rudest shocks from startling and revolutionary disclosures of science, from historical criticism, and from that special department of history

which we call the science of 'comparative religion,' and that modern developments of psychology have been bewildering our minds about the foundations of religion. Certainly the Christian religion had become entangled in ideas and institutions which had become antiquated, and we are bound to face the difficult task of disentangling it from the old and re-establishing it in the new—of distinguishing what is essential and permanent in our religion from what belonged to the transitory condition of the old world or the middle age or the Renaissance. But it by no means follows that the more revolutionary spirits should be allowed to have it their own way. Nothing is more familiar in history than that the devotees of new sciences or new philosophical ideas or new enthusiasms are found to make claims on behalf of their respective interests which calmer subsequent thought or fuller experience repudiates. Violent reaction of mind from the old to the new is not likely to be the solid way to truth. Many a man who has surrendered himself to such a reaction from the old orthodoxy in the hey-day of youth finds in the maturer experience of manhood that he has been largely the victim of delusions; and though he cannot easily recover his balance or retrace his steps, he is forced to recognize that he has lamentably

wasted his time and lost his opportunities by yielding to plausible but unsubstantial arguments or enthusiasms. I dare to say that a mass of intelligent people to-day are being deluded by our modernists, and need nothing so much as to accept the challenge to think for themselves.

I do not doubt that traditional theology needs a great deal of revision in the light of modern knowledge—that, for example, the idea of the Bible as being on all subjects as 'the infallible book,' and the idea that the stories in Genesis of the creation and fall of man are historical records, deeply as those ideas have entered into theology, have to be abandoned or very radically modified, together with a large part of the heritage of Calvinism; but also I cannot doubt that the extent of the necessary abandonments is being very grossly exaggerated, and that there is a real highway, or *via media*, between what the Americans call fundamentalism, or, as I should prefer to call it, blind conservatism on the one side and radical modernism on the other. Accordingly, what I propose to do in these lectures—invoking upon my effort, now at starting and throughout its course, the blessing of God our Father, and the approval of our Lord, and the help of the Holy Spirit, as much for you who listen as for me who speak

—what I propose to do first of all is to analyse the grounds of the Christian hope as we find it so vividly presented in the New Testament. We shall find it to be rooted in certain convictions about God, which are not so much reasoned propositions as spiritual intuitions; and we shall proceed to ask what was their source. Then when we have made these intuitions or convictions explicit in propositions —first of all as a doctrine about God—we shall endeavour to see whether their ground is rationally adequate, and whether we can expect them to hold their own in the face of modern experience and science, so as to be the spiritual lights of men for the present and the future as they have been in the past. When I have endeavoured in the second and third lectures to do this, only of course in outline, we will pursue the same enquiry on the historical ground with regard to the estimate of our Lord's person (IV) and with regard to the Church and the sacraments (V); and finally (VI) we will seek to draw together the various elements of religion, institutional, intellectual, and mystical, into such combination and synthesis as is essential to the formation and maintenance of a sane and balanced religious temper.

On all these subjects I want to suggest to you that while we resolve to think freely, we

should resolve also to accept the intellectual duty of making up our minds, and ask of God the grace of decision. Let me commend to you the words of one who, least of all men, could be accused of encouraging hasty judgements—I mean the late Dr. Hort: 'The easy belief, the lazy belief, the easy acquiescence in suspense between belief and disbelief, which infect those multitudes upon whom the burden of asking themselves whether the faith of the Church is true or not has been laid, are manifestations of a single temper of mind which ought to cause Christians more disquiet than the growing force of well-weighed hostility.' [1] You see, Dr. Hort reckons as so disquieting not only a cheap orthodoxy which refuses the duty of testing its beliefs, but also an easy spirit of enquiry which finds all new views interesting and ignores the responsibility of making up one's mind—which also keeps out of sight the consideration that almost all the most important decisions in life, as Bishop Butler taught us, have to be taken and acted upon on the basis of the greater probability. There will always remain 'something to be said' on the other side. We cannot—we dare not—wait for demonstrative certainty.

I want also to suggest to you that it is

[1] Hort quoted by his son, Sir Arthur Hort; see *Mod. Churchman*, September 1925, p. 456.

reasonable to ask men and women, before they consider this or that modern proposal for dealing with the inherited faith, to gain as clear and well grounded an idea as is possible of what the Christian faith, as it is presented in the New Testament, really was, studying it there reverently and objectively and with due regard to the ancient saying that 'the Scriptures must be read in the same spirit in which they were written.' So many people criticize the Christian religion who have taken no pains to find out what, at its best, it really was and is.

Almost all men in some sense believe in God and, when once men have perceived the close unity of the universe, as developing science reveals it to them, such a belief must be a belief in one God, at the root of things. There was, when Christianity came into the world, such a belief, almost universal in the educated world of Greeks and Romans—a belief in God either as the soul or reason of the world, or as the supreme being, the almost unknowable One. But this God of the philosophers was abstract, impersonal, indifferent to men—indeed wholly aloof from the corrupt world of flesh and blood, in which men wallowed impotent, under the dominion of matter and fate and evil spirits; so that for men's urgent practical needs they sought refuge in the

many inferior gods of the traditional religions, or in the mystery-cults which promised their votaries redemption into a better world above. And to-day, when many of our philosophers [1] find their reasonings lead them to affirm the one God, yet that which they affirm appears to be singularly inadequate to the needs of common men. God is mostly depersonalized; He (if we may use the personal pronoun) appears to be identified with the 'spiritual values' of the world. He is not one who can hear our particular prayers; or take particular action for our redemption; or reveal Himself from beyond the limits of nature. The thoughts about God on which religious devotion has been nourished are depreciated as anthropomorphic. Popular religion, it is conceded, may continue to assume the existence of the God of tradition, but philosophy, we are assured, cannot accept its creed as the expression of reality. Religion in fact must be regarded as a necessary emotion based on intellectual delusion.[2] It is this class of assumption that we need to cross-question.[3]

[1] The article on 'Theism' in Hastings' *Dict. of Relig. and Ethics*, by A. E. Taylor, will guard us against a too optimistic estimate.

[2] See R. G. Collingwood, *Speculum Mentis* (Oxford, 1924), pp. 130, 265, 268, and the whole of chaps. iv and vii, p. 554.

[3] On the practical deficiencies of the religion of the philosophers, see *Belief in God*, p. 61.

Under these conditions we return to our enquiry into the Christian doctrine of God. The Christian Church undoubtedly brought into the world a belief in God, developed out of Judaism under the teaching of Jesus, which inspired it with an unconquerable hope and made it able to defy the world, both its rulers and its philosophers, and in large measure to appropriate its intellectual resources; and though it was met by the hostility of the ruler and the contempt of the philosopher, it was enabled to win the old world and to reform the savage new world of the Middle Ages, and to be the moral and spiritual strength of the partly Christian civilization which we have inherited. Certainly it demands respectful consideration. Certainly a man is no better than an irreverent fool if he tosses it aside without seriously trying to understand it. Certainly also a man is blind to all the deeper teachings of experience if he imagines that 'it does not so much matter what exactly a man believes about God.'[1] For though in many individual

[1] See in J. M. E. McTaggart, *Some Dogmas of Religion* (Arnold, 1906), the first chapter on The Importance of Dogma,' p. 32: 'It will depend on those [metaphysical or dogmatic] beliefs, whether we shall consider the universe as determined by forces completely out of relation with the good, or whether, on the contrary, we may trust that the dearest ideals and aspirations of our own nature are realized or far more than realized in the ultimate reality. It will depend on

specimens men may exhibit an astonishing inconsistency between their theoretical beliefs and their real conduct—though you may have orthodox Christians behaving as if they were atheists and agnostics with an enthusiasm for Christian conduct—yet in the long reaches of human society we find the different dogmatic beliefs building quite different social structures —Buddhist, Hindu, Mohammedan, Christian ; and there is no reason in supposing that Christian morality or the Christian hope would permanently survive the Christian doctrine.

What, then, was the distinctive Christian belief in God on which its practical life and activity was grounded ? It was a belief in one God in which all the emphasis was on His personality—by which I mean that He deals with us and we must deal with Him as a person. He is one in whom is consciousness, will, purpose, emotion, and character (such as we know in ourselves) in supreme perfection— one of whose being human personality, with all its defects, is at least a far better image than blind mechanical power. This emphasis on personality was part of the Christian heritage from the Jewish prophets, which received additional force when it was believed that

whether we can regard the troubles of the present, and the uncertainties of the future, with the feelings of a mouse towards a cat, or of a child towards its father.'

God had most fully disclosed His real self in the human character of Jesus of Nazareth. Further, the prophets had taught men by constant reiteration the absolute righteousness of God, so that no manner of ceremonial approach to Him could have any value which did not carry with it the doing of His will and the forming of a character conformable to His. But the meaning of the divine righteousness had been infinitely deepened when the awful God was believed to have come among men as very man, and revealed God's fatherhood in personal loving-kindness and uttermost self-sacrifice, yearning for and seeking the salvation of every individual man.

Again, Christians from the first were taught to think of God as present throughout creation in active energy—in modern phrase as immanent—but this thought of God was secondary or derivative rather than primary or dominant. For He was, first of all, to be thought of as prior to all things and independent of all, self-existent and self-complete, the absolute creator of all things that are, which exist but at His will, the final judge of all rational beings, and the sole legitimate object of their worship.

Again, as creator, God has a purpose in His whole creation and this purpose purely good. But He was not content to execute His purpose only by mechanical or unconscious instruments.

He created also conscious spirits. He created man 'in His own image and likeness'—with will and intelligence—to be, as it were, His vicegerent in the world, to understand His purpose and to co-operate in its execution. Herein was to be man's righteousness and His joy. But the freedom to obey meant also the freedom to disobey and to resist; and men have in fact so disobeyed and resisted God on the widest scale—in league, it is felt, with rebellious spirits from beyond this world—as to dishonour His name and pervert the moral order and aspect of the world. Thus God, when He undertakes to cleanse and redeem and perfect what has been by human wills, and rebel spirits dimly seen in the background, polluted and disordered, still respects the fateful gift of freedom which He has bestowed on man, and appeals to man himself for help, and finally, in the person of His Son, Himself becomes man for the redemption of mankind (so to speak) from within—to become the fountain-head of a new humanity freely pardoned and restored to liberty in the communicated gift of the Spirit of God. It is this—the being possessed by the Spirit of God, the Spirit alike of truth and moral liberty—which is the culminating gift of God to man.

Once more, the creation of free beings involved no doubt a self-limitation of the

divine omnipotence. God, so to speak, consented to stand far enough off from men, even while breathing into them the breath to live by, as to leave them free to choose and to act of themselves—and in effect by their perversity they have made the world something quite different from the Kingdom of God. But this means no real abandonment on God's part of His almightiness. One day God is to come into His own in His whole creation, and in the person of His Son to reveal His judgement of weal or woe upon all free and responsible spirits, and to perfect and restore mankind and, with mankind, His whole universe; and it is in the light of their eternal destiny in this 'world to come' that men are to labour here and now for the Kingdom of God, assured of the ultimate fulfilment of the divine purpose, of which they have received the foretaste specially in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

But for all this clear knowledge about God and His purpose and His character, which availed to make faith enlightened and hope sure and love active, yet the Church was conscious that the light which it enjoyed was but a central ray of light amidst circumambient cloud, and that what man knew was little more than enough to elevate his life and guide his footsteps in the present darkness; but one

day the fuller light would come and he should 'know even as he is known.'

This may serve as an outline sketch not of the religion of the New Testament as a whole but of the thought of God which it enshrines—of that, however, without reference for the moment to that conception of God as Trinity in Unity which was already implicitly recognized as soon as the name of God came to be expressed as the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. That doctrine of trinity in unity was afterwards found to be a conception of God which had in it not only light for the intellect but a practical bearing on life.[1] But the practical bearing on life of the doctrine concerning the one God which I have sought to analyse, and which is everywhere obvious in the New Testament, is much more manifest. We can see at once why the leaders of Christian thought, finding themselves face to face with the monotheism of contemporary philosophy in the non-Christian world, should have so determinedly refused to be satisfied with it—should have contended not for *any* doctrine of one God, but for that which was specifically Christian; for the God of the philosophers and the gods of the mysteries would have no such effects on character and life as the God of the Christian faith.

[1] See *Belief in Christ*, chap. viii.

For here is a doctrine which bows a man down in utter self-abasement as a creature before his Creator and a polluted sinner before his awful judge, but then at once lifts him up in reconciled sonship into the joy of fellowship with his Father and the glory of co-operation with a divine purpose of love; here is a doctrine which leaves him awestruck before the inscrutable Majesty and the unfathomable Mystery, and yet sends him on his way rejoicing in the clearest practical knowledge of the character and purpose of the Father as made evident in His Son Jesus; here is the source of a steadfast will to expect, or at least a readiness to face, the worst calamities, coupled with a radiant confidence in the final issue of things; here is the ground of a humility which prostrates a man before God and yet sets him with a god-given confidence to face any kind of tyrant without cringing or fear. Here is a school which rids him of all foolish optimism about human nature or vanity about himself, and rids him at the same time of the cynicism and despair into which such optimism and such vanity, under the blows of experience, constantly react: for he knows the sad secret of human untrustworthiness as well as the cynic knows it; but he knows also how easily the worst of men may be forgiven, if they will but turn to God, and how splendid the victory

which they may gain over their selfishness and their passions. Here, too, he learns to rid himself of the paralysing idea that the material body, to which anyhow he is now inextricably tied, is itself evil and polluting, and to feel a holy confidence that his body, like the whole of material nature, is good and meant for good; and all will 'come right,' if once the will is given to God, and the only real obstacle removed to the inflow of divine grace. Here, finally, is a school in which he is bound to learn the dignity of human fellowship, of public-spirit, and of sacrifice, and the baseness and stupidity of selfishness.

And surely the mingled humility and strength of the Christian character, and the power of adjustment to all sorts of circumstances which it has shown, and the nobility of sonship and the largeness of love which it has exhibited in its best specimens, all down the ages, is an evidence which few can resist when they are really in contact with it, that somehow it holds the secret of life and is in touch with reality.

And here we must pause and leave for another lecture the attempt to throw some light on the question whether the thought of God which the Christian creed has taught the world can claim intellectual validity—can make good its profession to be the truth.

## LECTURE II

# HOW THIS FAITH CAME INTO BEING AND EXPRESSION, AS A GRADUAL AND CULMINATING SELF-DISCLOSURE OF GOD

**And why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?—Luke xii. 57 (R.V.).**

That is the challenge of the Son of Man—to think for ourselves and conscientiously.

We were considering last week the rich content of the thought of God which is presented to us in the New Testament. Now we must ask ourselves whence this doctrine of God came—and, first of all, not what account we moderns may be disposed to give of it, but what account its first teachers and recipients gave of it. And about that there can be no question: they did not proclaim their doctrine, like the Greek philosophers who despised them,[1] as a conclusion from a reasoning process, but

[1] 'Faith, *which the Greeks disparage as futile and barbarous*,' says Clement of Alexandria, quoted by Inge, *Modern Churchman*, September 1925, p. 279.

as the authoritative word of God. Fundamentally their doctrine was an inheritance from their Jewish forefathers, which they had handed down to them as a divine self-disclosure through the prophets. For their prophets had not argued and reasoned and concluded, but had experienced a powerful movement of God within their souls constraining them to utter His word; and after a long period, during which the prophets seemed to speak to deaf ears, the remnant of the nation as a whole in its affliction in Babylon had acknowledged this divine message, and had set themselves to obey it, and had suffered it to remodel their folk-lore, their tradition, their history, their 'wisdom,' their poetry, their social law and their worship. The whole Old Testament thus became the embodiment of the word of God. Then, after a long period, when the terrifying and vitalizing message of the prophets had become a tradition, when prophecy had changed into law and had narrowed and hardened in the lapse of time, the spirit of prophecy had revived again in John the Baptist, and his greater successor Jesus of Nazareth had acknowledged the teaching of the prophets as the word of God and had built upon it as upon a secure foundation. In His own teaching He had wonderfully deepened and widened it—but still speaking not as one who reasoned

and argued and drew conclusions, but as one who possessed within Himself a mysterious fount of authority and could speak to men even as God Himself. Thus the teaching of the Jewish scriptures was enriched through the lips of Jesus, and interpreted in the light of the apostles' experience of Jesus and of His Spirit—so that the one name of God became for them the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Thus it had become 'the Gospel'—God's message of salvation to all the world—to be received in faith 'not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe.' [1]

It should be noticed that, not merely in method but also in motive, the apostolic doctrine differed from that of the philosophers. The chief motive of philosophers, ancient and modern, as of our men of science, is simply to know. But the Jews were singularly without this purely intellectual curiosity. Such a sign of it as we find, for instance, in the Book of Wisdom [2] was probably due to foreign influences. Their own native philosophy took the

[1] 1 Thess. ii. 13.

[2] See vii. 17 ff. about the 'unerring knowledge of the things that are.' Some of the Apocalypses also exhibit a certain speculative curiosity about the universe, not of a high intellectual order, which was probably the result of contact with Persian speculations.

form of practical wisdom; and the message of the prophets, communicated, as they believed, from the God of Israel, was primarily a moral message—a message about how men must live, first as a nation and then as individuals. So again the teaching of Christ was primarily the teaching of 'the way'; and the first name of the Church was 'the Way'—the way of true life. No doubt it was taken for granted throughout that man's life was always dependent upon God, and that the most important consideration for man was the character and will of God. Thus the way of life involved a doctrine about God—His character, His purpose, His nature—and it found its chief motives in this knowledge of God. Nevertheless, the self-disclosure of God which gave them this knowledge was practical in its aim. It was given in order to guide man's life—not at all to satisfy his intellectual curiosity. Thus in St. Paul, who was the first to formulate Christian theology in its main lines, there is a marked element of agnosticism. He does not claim for the Christian knowledge of God that it is complete and absolute. He has a conception of a knowledge reserved for a future life which will 'annul' or 'do away' man's present knowledge.[1] But his present

[1] 1 Cor. xiii. 8 ff. But it is worth notice that even so St. Paul expects faith and hope, both of which imply a state of

knowledge is all that is needed for the practical life of faith and hope and love. Thus for man in this life it is consummate 'light' and 'truth'—that is, it brings man into satisfying contact with reality. Only this practical illumination is consistent with darkness on a multitude of questions which do not concern man's practical and moral interests—'We know in part.' We see but a reflection of the reality in a metal mirror; we apprehend but as in a riddle. And there is very little sign in St. Paul of what we should call scientific or speculative interest.

However, he gives us a fairly clear idea of his conception of the relation of faith to intellectual theory on the field which he really cared about—the spiritual and ethical field. He held, it seems, in effect, that man by his reason and his conscience—given him that he might 'feel after God and find Him'—could arrive at the discovery of God, even 'His eternal power and Godhead,' and to a certain extent His moral will for man—so that man

progress towards something yet unattained, to 'abide' in the life beyond. The familiar lines:

> 'Faith will vanish into sight,
> Hope be emptied in delight,'

appear to contradict 1 Cor. xiii. 13. So St. Paul seems to encourage us to regard heaven, and therefore the knowledge of heaven, as a progressive state.

is without excuse in degenerating into senseless idolatries and immoralities; but that for effective knowledge of *what* God is intellectual enquiry had proved quite inadequate. 'When in the wise providence of God' (so we may paraphrase his words) 'the world through its philosophy had failed to know God, it pleased God, through the divine message appealing to faith (which the philosophers mocked at as folly), to give men the knowledge which could really save.'[1]

Not that St. Paul, or the other first Christian teachers, demanded a blind faith. They appealed to 'evidences': to prophecy, as proving an age-long divine purpose fulfilled in Christ[2]; to miracles, especially to the resurrection of Jesus, as witnessing to divine co-operation in the present; and to the indisputable power with which the promised Spirit of God had endowed His Church in response to its faith. They also appealed to the conscience of mankind, as compelling those who were not blinded by worldly motives to recognize the message of the Christ, when they heard it, as the truth—moving them to pass from darkness

[1] See Acts xvii. 27; Rom. i. 19–20; 1 Cor. i. 21 ff.

[2] We should maintain that though the N.T. writers interpret particular sayings of the prophets uncritically, yet, following on their Lord, they interpret aright the main sense of O.T. prophecy: see *The Holy Spirit and the Church*, p. 64, and Addit. Note, p. 198, of this volume.

to light by the surrender of their wills to God and His word, and so to obtain the conviction of faith, which is a divine gift; for 'no man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in Holy Spirit.' We should notice that the atmosphere of the New Testament is quite free from obscurantism. It appeals frankly to all man's best faculties for knowing. It reverberates the challenge of Christ, 'How is it that ye know not how to interpret this time? And why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?' Moreover, though the Christian's belief about God had its roots in the divine word, which must be received in faith and verified in experience, yet so received and so verified, the divine word becomes the spring of a 'wisdom' or 'knowledge' which would prove much more satisfying than anything the philosophers could afford.[1]

This sort of outlined theory was the root of the Christian philosophy of the Greek fathers. It made them contend energetically for the specific Christian doctrine of God, which they, with St. Paul, proclaimed as God's own disclosure of Himself, to be received in faith and applied in experience; but in the light of this divinely communicated message they claim to be able to appropriate what the reason of the Greeks had contributed to human enlightenment, discriminating the false from the true,

[1] See Phil. i. 9; Col. ii. 3; 1 Cor. ii. 6–15.

and to reach a fuller and completer vision of the whole of reality than any which the philosophers had been able to attain to.[1]

Now, the whole of this conception of man as needing to be enlightened, and as having actually been enlightened, especially through the prophets of Israel and Jesus Christ, by a positive divine revelation to be first of all received by faith—this conception which pervades the New Testament is exceedingly well worth pondering. But among those who in our day would especially desire to rank among 'the enlightened' it appears to be a scandal.

If to-day a man urges the content of Christian revelation as having a most important bearing on life and thought—as involving truths about God and man and man's moral duty which a reasonable man must accept as authoritative—he is apt to be met by a shrug of the shoulders implying that his claim is irrational and anti-

[1] On the relation of faith to reason in the New Testament and in Clement of Alexandria, who in this respect was a pioneer among the Greek Fathers, see the excellent address of Dr. Inge's, at a recent Oxford Conference, in *The Modern Churchman*, September 1925, pp. 278–9. But in this address I regret the paragraph on p. 282, which seeks to depreciate any confident anticipation of the ultimate future—the 'belief that the scheme of things will gradually, or suddenly, be remoulded nearer to our hearts' desire.' Surely such an anticipation is, according to our Lord's teaching, an essential element of faith. Can faith in God be maintained without postulating His finally perfected kingdom? See below, p. 186.

quated. And modern theological literature of the apologetic sort is apt to give the question involved the go-by. But the idea of an authoritative revelation is so deeply engrained into the substance of the Christian religion that it is absurd to ignore it, if the enquiry be whether the Christian religion is true or not. Leaving aside, then, for the moment the Christian appeal to prophecy and to miracle, and the whole question of historical evidence, let us consider whether the original claim of Christianity to rest upon a positive divine revelation is still valid for our time: that is to say, whether (1) the idea of a divine revelation—conveying information to man concerning God such as his 'unassisted reason' would have been incapable of attaining with any security—is for us still rationally tenable, and also whether (2) the particular claim of the Christian religion to be, in some unique and consummate sense, divinely revealed, is still valid.

We must not indeed allow ourselves to put reason and revelation into opposition the one to the other. Revelation can come only from God, who is the supreme reason, and can only address itself to the reason in us, which is also God's gift; and, on the other hand, there is perhaps no reasoning process which does not involve some element of revelation in reaching its conclusion. And in the experience of the

spiritual life what has been received as the word of God, on authority, becomes merged in the substance of the man's own thoughts so as to form an indissoluble unity in his consciousness. But broadly I want to contrast two distinguishable methods of arriving at religious truth—the method of argument and enquiry, which is the method of the philosophers, and the method of accepting a message believed to be the word of God, which was certainly and historically the method by which the Jews and the Christian Church did in fact become possessed of their doctrine. And because it is the fashion to ignore this fact, I want to press the enquiry whether it is a valid method of arriving at real information about God and about our nature and our duty, and whether we have grounds for believing that such a self-disclosure of God has been actually made to men.

1. First, then, let us recognize that the older rationalism, which subsisted down to Herbert Spencer, and which claimed to start from self-evident principles and to proceed by quasi-mathematical deduction or scientific induction from certitude to certitude, leaving nothing to faith, and resting its enlarging theory of the world only upon demonstrated conclusions—this sort of rationalism is now really antiquated. We are bound to admit that explicit reason of

this sort is comparatively a late comer into human experience. Man was first of all a 'conative' being. His physical appetites and his instinct of self-preservation forced him to act in the world on an instinctive faith, not in the least founded upon any exercise of conscious reason, that his experience of to-day will be available for to-morrow, that in some sense the future will resemble the past, that his insistent demand upon nature for some sort of constancy and order will be responded to. The root of all science lies in this instinctive faith, triumphing over all apparent discouragements, in the rationality of the world. And those philosophers seem to be certainly in the right who maintain that still, for all the vast confirmations which the necessary scientific hypotheses have received, they can never be matter of demonstration.[1] Science can never say that it reposes upon demonstrated certainty. It still remains an adventure rooted in the primitive instinctive faith that nature is rational, and will respond always and everywhere to the instinctive human demand for law and order. If the psychologist twits the scientific man with his anthropomorphic as-

[1] See Dr. F. A. Tennant's admirable lectures, *Miracle and its Philosophical Presuppositions* (Cambridge, 1925), p. 21. 'Science, as well as religious faith, is at bottom the substantiation of things hoped for, the pragmatic evidencing of things not seen.'

sumptions, or the metaphysician tells him that he cannot know anything except processes of his own mind, he has no reply, except to say that mankind has always believed itself to be face to face with objective nature, and has always instinctively postulated that nature will respond to mind, and has widely and deeply verified its faith. But it always remains a faith—such as is well defined in the epistle to the Hebrews as the substantiation of a hope and the verification of an anticipation never fully demonstrated.

This appears to be certainly true and not unimportant. But of course in the region of moral and æsthetic 'values' the same principle is much more evident.[1] In this region, reason —in the narrower sense of explicit reasoning and demonstration—holds only a secondary place from beginning to end. Man appears in the universe of things as a being having an instinctive appreciation of beauty as an end in itself—as somehow essentially desirable—and of some standard of conduct as essentially right. Whatever may be said as to the utilitarian or social origins of the ideas of beauty and of goodness, undoubtedly they quickly outgrow any such considerations and subsist as valid in themselves; beauty claiming

[1] See Dr. Inge, *op. cit.*, p. 288: 'I think I have made it plain how I understand faith,' etc.

to be sought by man, and the moral law claiming to be obeyed by man, each for its own sake. The world of poetry and art, and the higher moral order of the world, subsist in virtue of the acknowledgement of this claim, which rests upon an intuition of values more or less common to all men, an instinctive faith which, at least in the case of beauty, appears obstinately to refuse to be rationalized.[1]

In this region of spiritual ideals not only is it plain that instinctive intuition or faith was prior to reasoning, but also that even in the life of developed man explicit reason has only a regulative and secondary place. And for anyone who recognizes that beauty, truth, and goodness are quite as real as physical processes or visible things, this means that intuitive faith holds a very important place in the pathway to reality.

Thus we come to religion. If it makes its first appeal to something other than explicit reason, if its 'proofs' always fall far short of demonstrable certitudes, if it remains largely grounded on intuition—this is nothing singular to religion. Again, if it had its origin in crude imaginations, and made gross mistakes in its progress, such defects it shares in common with art, with morals, and with science. What cannot be denied is that man, as he presents

[1] See *Belief in God*, chap. iii.

himself on the broad surface of history, just as he has believed himself intuitively to be face to face with a real nature, and face to face with men like himself, so has believed himself to be in contact with Higher Powers, and has applied his mind, as his mental experience developed, to rationalize and moralize his religious beliefs, without losing them; and when religion has seemed to be under a cloud and men have sought to eliminate it, as something which ought not to count in a practical world, it has constantly revived in fresh power and triumphed over its enemies; and faith in God—in all its various forms—acting on the intuition of God's reality, has accumulated, through the influence of prophets and priests and through the witness of innumerable individuals, a body of experience so vast as to make it impossible to deny that man is the real contact with God, really dealing with and being dealt with by God, without at the same time denying the validity of all human experience and opening the doors wide to a thoroughgoing scepticism, such as would paralyse not only man's religious activity, but his moral, social, and scientific activity as well.

2. But all that we have done so far is to convince ourselves that faith grounded on intuition may be a valid ground of practical certainty, and that religion is not to be dis-

credited because it appeals to intuition and faith. But religion—at least the Christian religion—does not merely appeal to an intuition of truth in this or that individual or in the mass of mankind or in the Christian world. At least it is not content with exactly this kind of appeal to constant experience. This whole stream of Christian experience was set going by, and depends upon, the special experiences of prophets and most of all of Jesus Christ; and their 'intuition' took the form of a conviction that they were in contact with God and that God through them was revealing Himself and giving a message of truth to His people. We need not pause at this moment to discriminate in this particular the consciousness of our Lord from the consciousness of the prophets. But what we need to do is to examine the validity of this claim; and as we are accused of laying much too much stress upon the prophets of Israel, let us be careful to lay a broader foundation.

The claim to be the recipient of a message from God is unmistakable in Zoroaster, the ancient Iranian prophet, the contemporary of Samuel perhaps, and spiritually worthy surely to be his peer. It is prominent also in Mohammed, who at the beginning of his career at least presents some evidence of genuine inspiration. But, much more widely, this

claim to speak by divine inspiration, which has characterized the world's prophets, is akin to the consciousness of saints and poets and artists all the world over that their intuitions do not have their origin in their own minds, but come from beyond, from the divine, as commands or messages or visions which they are bound to receive and to interpret. It is a large and very important portion of mankind who appear as specially conscious of themselves, in various degrees and by different methods, as subjects of the influence or spirit or voice of God. This sort of consciousness and the claim accompanying it have been associated at times with the grossest ignorance and superstition and with every kind of charlatanry and corruption; but they are associated also with the names of the spiritual leaders of mankind, who have most surely raised the human level.

Looking, then, at the history of the moral and spiritual life of mankind, we must dare to say that we find there not only the history of man's attempt to find God but also of God's communication of Himself to man, and that, in varying measures, all the world over—a communication hindered indeed and thwarted by the density of the material which man's savagery and ignorance and wilfulness present to God, but never wholly without effect, and

finding in scattered individuals even full and clear expression. And if I claim for the prophets of Israel as a whole, in the matter of religion, something analogous to what we have always ascribed to the Greeks in philosophy and art, and to the Romans in law and government—what we now ascribe also to the Chinese and Japanese in respect of the sense of beauty—if I claim for them to have been in a special degree 'the sacred school of the knowledge of God and of the spiritual life for all mankind,' that is only what is required by the facts.[1] Zoroaster, for instance, emerges out of a dark background and shines bright with prophetic glory; yet it is but a transient phenomenon, and the light is swallowed up again in the darkness of superstition and formalism. It looks like a divine attempt baffled. But in the case of the Hebrew prophets what we find is, not only in particular persons a startling vividness of individual consciousness of God and His word, constraining them to distinctive utterances, but also a continuity over hundreds of years in very varied emphasis of the same message, a message strangely unique and wholly inexplicable by the conditions and the surroundings of those who first delivered it, a message which after the resistance of generations compelled the

[1] See *Belief in God*, p. 82.

obedience of the whole people, and finally a message which reached a culmination in Jesus of Nazareth unlike anything else in the world.

For, again, if I am charged with isolating the prophets of Israel, I say I do not isolate them, but view them only as organs of a gradual and incomplete revelation which reached its climax in Jesus of Nazareth, in whom the distinct strands of the prophetic tradition were combined into a wondrous whole, and a quite new tone of authority and meaning added to the word of God. I fancy there are very few men who can seek quietly to put themselves in the presence of Jesus Christ and listen to His words of penetrating power spoken with absolute authoritativeness, and then turn their backs and say, 'I do not believe He had any more authority to speak for God or about God than any other preacher.' Jesus of Nazareth spoke with a note of authority inherent in His own person, different from that of the prophets who said 'thus saith the Lord'; but He is in the succession of the prophets and in Him they culminate.

Then, finally, we should decline to consider the prophets and Him in whom they culminate apart from all that has happened since their message was received by mankind—all the confirmation of assent which it has gained from the multitudes who have received it in

faith and verified it in experience, and have 'set to their seal that God is true.' Who can estimate the vast addition to the worth of humanity, from those who have received the Christian message as the word of God?[1]

To me it seems impossible really to consider the weight of the prophetic message culminating in Christ and issuing in all the responsive experience of Christendom without being deeply impressed—I would rather say convinced, with an almost overwhelming conviction that what we find here is really God, in many parts and many manners, speaking to our fathers by the prophets, and to us finally by His Son. I can conceive no rational ground on which it can be regarded as impossible or even as improbable that God should be of such sort as that He can meet man's efforts to find Him out by a responsive disclosure of Himself to man; or have made that response to become specially effective through a particular race. I see no reason in the assumption that God, who does everything in general, can do nothing in particular—cannot be conceived of as hearing and answering particular prayers or as initiating and bringing to perfection through a variety of stages a historical movement of redemption. I see no *reason* in such a denial; for it is equivalent to the denial that God is personal;

[1] *Belief in God*, pp. 107 f.

which means not that human personality supplies an adequate image of the transcendent and eternal God, but that conscious personality, which is the highest form of existence known to us, is a better image of God than blind force or vegetable or animal life.[1] And then, if my mind is not blocked by an *a priori* denial that a self-disclosure of God such as can convey information and guidance to men is possible, I see evidence that overwhelms me that it has actually been given, and in particular that the Jews were the vehicles of it, until it reached its consummation in Him who was more than a Jew—who was the Son of Man—in whom it became universal and final. Thus in the general attitude of the intellectual world of to-day—in its refusal to face this venerable claim of revelation and give serious consideration to the weight

[1] See Prof. Caldecott, *Modern Churchman*, September 1925, p. 300: 'As I read the literature of our twenty-five years I find that there is increased ground for our recognizing both the possibility and the fact of special revelations.' This Prof. Caldecott recognizes as the fifth gain of the last twenty-five years, the other four being: (1) The acquiescence of science in limitations which prevent interference with the areas of philosophical and religious belief; (2) the increasing adoption of judgement by *values*; (3) the increase of confidence in the supremacy of the concept of personality; (4) the extension of the area of spiritual experience by the inclusion of sane and healthy mystical experiences. This, I think, is a very valuable paper.

of the evidence—I cannot help seeing something at work different from reasonableness, and I cannot help praying, 'From hardness of heart and contempt of Thy word, good Lord, deliver us.'

Of course, anyone who argues in favour of human intuition as having a substantial validity, is met by the rejoinder that intuitions, when translated into propositions, have been largely diverse and contradictory, and that moral codes and religions, claiming authority as divinely inspired, have been various and antagonistic. This is undeniable. I suppose that any religious belief, based upon a claim of inspiration, if it is to be seriously considered, must respond to three tests—first, it must have shown its power to lift human life to a higher level, as Christianity, we should contend, over a very wide area and through many changes of civilization and circumstances, in virtue of its special beliefs about God, has produced among men a character of sonship to God which at its best is like nothing else in the world in its mastery over passion and circumstance and the splendour of its vision and the depth of its peace. Secondly, it should be comprehensive—it should be able to recognize an action of God and movement of His Spirit which is universal, and be able to assimilate and give its place to all that has really strength-

ened and enlightened human life in all races; so that if it claims to supersede all other religions, it should be by comprehending in one fuller light the various rays which have anywhere refreshed the souls of man. Thirdly, while it claims a higher authority in moral and spiritual matters than scientific enquiry or philosophical reflection could ever generate, it should, from its own point of view, be able to find room for all the results of human knowledge—justifying at no point the charge of obscurantism—and be able to generate a philosophy which shall show itself more able to give account of experience and knowledge as a whole, than any other faith or theory can claim to do.

So we will proceed to face the formidable giants, physical science and historical criticism,[1] to see whether the Christian faith standing on its own ground cannot claim them as friends of the house rather than as destructive foes.

[1] The claim of philosophy—not mentioned further in these lectures—is considered in the essay which follows them, pp. 144 ff.

## LECTURE III

## THAT ON THE BASIS OF THIS FAITH, THE REAL CONCLUSIONS OF SCIENCE CAN BE FREELY ACCEPTED AND WELCOMED

**All things are yours.—1 Cor. iii. 21 f.**

We have seen that there are really convincing reasons for believing that as God, our Father, is everywhere more or less disclosing Himself to His human children, so He has, much more fully than elsewhere, given a special revelation of Himself, meant at last for all mankind, which began with the Hebrew prophets and culminated in Jesus Christ. Thus there confronts us a Word of God which, as such, claims to be received by us in awful reverence and joyful faith. It has been given as a practical guide to life—as 'the way'—but it involves propositions about God for the intellect, such as would never have been fully or securely arrived at by philosophical enquiry, but which yet must be recognized as intellectually valid, if they are to retain their moral authority as the truth or reality. For they do no more than make explicit what is implicit in the

message. These intellectual propositions are such as the following: that there is one God who is the creator of all that is, and that all other beings in their various grades are simply His creatures, absolutely dependent upon Him; that, above and beyond His creation—which He sustains and in which He abides—God is alive with the fullness of personal life (such as human personality only represents on a lower plane), awful in holiness and powerful throughout the whole[1]; that His purpose in His whole creation is good and His very being love; that He has created mankind as free beings to co-operate with His purpose and to have personal communion with Himself; that, when by the gross and persistent misuse of his freedom man had fallen from his high estate and introduced confusion and needless misery into the world, God the creator became the re-creator and redeemer, entering Himself into our human state and misery, and so presents Himself to our whole race and to each one of us not as Lord and Judge only, but as an infinitely compassionate and self-sacrificing Saviour, re-endowing us with His Spirit; and finally that, after all the self-limitation involved in tolerating the lawlessness of free beings, God is at last 'to come into His own'

[1] That is the meaning of 'omnipotent,' rather than 'able to do anything.' He is limited by nothing outside Himself.

in undisputed supremacy throughout His whole renewed creation. Here we have a rich mine of spiritual information which, at each point, makes an immense difference for character, inspiring mankind at once with an awful fear of God and with a profound hope, gladdening us with the sense of sonship in the Divine Spirit, cleansing us from sin and making us active in co-operation for the establishment of the divine kingdom, glorifying self-sacrifice and rebuking selfishness. The Christian character, as the world knows it, depends upon this divine revelation ; and by its moral supremacy it goes far to vindicate its truth ; and its claim to be ' the truth ' (or ' the reality ') is justified in the experience of those who have believed it. As Dr. Inge says, ' it begins as an experiment and ends as an experience.' Moreover, the man who has most thoroughly made the initial act of faith in the divine word, and surrendered himself most thoroughly to its searching claim, and has had the richest experience of its strengthening and enlightening power, is the man who has the best right to speak about it.

Now, the question is—can this man of faith and spiritual experience find himself free and at home in the world of scientific knowledge, or must he confess himself paralysed by finding an antagonism between the content of his

faith and the solid fabric of knowledge, which is vindicated as true by constantly growing power in its own sphere ?

In old days the whole world of knowledge could be more or less within the grasp of one man, an Aristotle or a Thomas Aquinas or a Ramon Lull. Now the almost infinite enlargement of knowledge has led inevitably to its division into departments, each, we must remember, begetting in the minds of those who labour exclusively in it, an almost inevitable narrowness. But it is the primary challenge of reason that we should recognize the unity of all truth, and welcome all the light we can get from all quarters ; and the man who believes in God, and recognizes in one God the source of all truth and all reality, must feel that it would be an intolerable situation if he were to find himself in antagonism to the really authoritative disclosures of any one of the physical sciences—for natural science is from God as truly as the prophetic word, though one is as liable as the other to misrepresentation and distortion.

Moreover, the believer must recognize that, in spite of some judicious warnings of Augustine, the Catholic Church, in the day when sciences were quite undeveloped, made the disastrous mistake of claiming authority to control science on its own ground. We cannot

read without our hearts sinking Cardinal Newman's words about the authority of the Church[1]:

'It has the prerogative of an indirect jurisdiction on subject-matters which lie beyond its own proper limits. . . . The Catholic Church claims not only to judge infallibly on religious questions, but to animadvert on opinions in secular matters which bear on religion, on matters of philosophy, of science, of literature, of history, and demands our submission to her claim. It claims to censure books, to silence authors, and to forbid discussions. It must of course be obeyed without a word.'

We who belong to the Church must wholeheartedly confess that to make such a claim was a lamentable mistake. The Church is put in trust of a treasury of spiritual knowledge and experience which it must jealously protect. But in regard to the secrets and processes of nature it has no authority at all. It was on the ground of incidental statements in the Bible that the Church claimed to lay its restraining hand on scientific discovery; but it should be recognized in the fullest sense that 'the Bible was not given to teach us science'—in other words, that the self-dis-

[1] Quoted by Dr. Inge, *Modern Churchman*, September 1925, p. 287. I feel sure these words are Cardinal Newman's and that I have read them. But I cannot lay my hand on them at the moment; and I am quoting them on Dr. Inge's authority.

closure of God, of which the Bible is the record, concerns *simply* the moral and spiritual education of mankind and leaves the investigation of the processes of physical nature to the unassisted faculties of man.

On its side science is with increasing distinctness recognizing its own limitation—its own abstractness.[1] The world of mathematics, physics, and chemistry is a world where nothing need be postulated except physical elements and mechanical laws. It asks no questions about origin or purpose. It is, we may say, its business to be agnostic about everything except its own proper subject-matter. A mind devoted only to such investigations may naturally incline to a materialistic view of the whole universe; but materialism is not science. It is only a false metaphysic constructed on a very partial basis. Thus biological studies demand fresh categories —the categories of chemistry and physics proving inadequate for the description of the processes of life. Here first, where life begins, do we find something which can properly be called development or evolution.[2] And it

[1] See Hobson's *Survey*, referred to on p. 52; or two recent 'collective volumes,' *Evolution in the Light of Modern Knowledge* (Blackie, 1925), and *Science, Religion, and Reality*, ed. J. Needham, esp. Eddington's Essay (Sheldon Press, 1926).

[2] See Prof. Soddy in *Evolution in the Light of Modern Knowledge*, pp. 401 f.

would seem that biologists increasingly find it difficult to explain the evolution of life without having recourse to the idea of a tendency in things hardly distinguishable from purpose.[1] At least biology can show no hostility to it. Then in the higher reaches of the evolution of life—especially in man—the idea of choice, made in accordance with conscious purpose, becomes more marked; and the Cambridge mathematician, Prof. E. W. Hobson, in his admirable *Survey of the Domain of Natural Science*,[2] disclaims any scientific right to ignore or repudiate the freedom of the will—a very restricted freedom from the scientific point of view, but all that religion needs in order to maintain its essential doctrine that men are morally responsible to God for conduct which ought not to have been and which might have been different. So again Prof. Hobson asserts that science properly so called can meet the claims of miracles with no *a priori* negative.[3]

[1] No one, I think, can read Shearman's *Natural Theology of Evolution* (Allen & Unwin, 1915) without admitting the conclusion that there are features in actual evolution which cannot be dissociated from the idea of conscious purpose.

[2] Camb. 1923, pp. 355, 367; see also Prof. Eddington n *Science, Religion, and Reality*, pp. 208, 214–16.

[3] *Op. cit.* p. 490. 'If that impossibility' (i.e. the impossibility of the occurrence of miracles) 'has been sometimes asserted by exponents of Natural Science, the assertion is merely a piece of *a priori* dogmatism, quite incapable of substantiation on scientific grounds.'

And Dr. Tennant, in his admirable little book on *Miracle and its Philosophical Presuppositions*,[1] has provided what I should venture to call a demonstration that miracles cannot, on scientific or philosophical grounds, be ruled out as impossible. It is a question of history.

For my own part, the possibility and rational credibility of the miraculous seems to be one question with that of the possibility and reality of free will in man. If there is a real, however

[1] Camb. 1925. But, at the conclusion of his lectures (p. 93), Dr. Tennant seems to me quite mistaken in his suggestion that, inasmuch as miracles cannot *demonstrate* the purpose of God without possibility of mistake, therefore they are without great importance. If the Gospels represent Christ's mind aright, He certainly refused to regard miracles as means of *compelling* belief; but regarded them as necessary to encourage or confirm a weak faith. Faith in most of us is very weak at times, specially when the awful vastness of nature oppresses one and the spectacle of its seeming indifference to all moral aims or distinctions. I speak as one of those who feel the doctrine that God is love the only intellectually difficult doctrine of Christianity; and I find therefore the well-attested nature-miracles of the New Testament not difficulties but intellectual supports, because they show me the control of nature certainly subservient to moral purpose, and they contradict the pressing insistence of dualism—such a dualism between physical nature and morality as Huxley yielded to. As the Christian religion could not have *begun* without miracles or the belief in miracles, so I think that to-day we are rationally led to believe that they actually occurred, and that without such belief the conviction of the Christian faith would not hold its ground.

restricted, power of choice in man, capable of directing the force under his control in the channel of different sorts of action, morally good or morally bad, by surrendering himself to this or that good or bad motive, this mysterious power is of such transcendent importance and gives to man such spiritual dignity in creation, that, if we believe in God, it is surely impossible not to read back into God this quality of freedom in such higher sense as would leave man His image and not His superior. Then if we attribute to God this rational freedom, limited by nothing but His own perfection, we must think of Him as able to act rationally. And it is an essential characteristic of rational, as distinguished from mechanical or purely instinctive activity, to be able to act in an extraordinary manner under exceptional circumstances. There, I take it, lies the whole philosophy of the miraculous. This world—the human and in part even the non-human world—had become so disturbed and distorted by sin that God the creator became the redeemer, the re-creator, of the world—not to disturb but to restore its true order; and it appears that to manifest the real purpose and order of creation, against the false order of sin, He found it necessary to do exceptional—what we call miraculous—acts in order to make evident to faith that even in

the physical events of the world His moral purpose is ultimately supreme.[1]

Moreover, in the whole region of human consciousness we become aware of a quite new category, clearly distinguishable from physical events in time, the category of *values* —truth, beauty, and goodness—which, once accepted, as they must be accepted, as belonging to the real world and not delusive imaginations of our own, shed a wholly new light upon the nature of reality, giving the whole world a spiritual and moral significance, and making the thought of God, and a personal God, an almost necessary and certainly a rational postulate.

The tendency in recent exponents of the physical sciences to recognize the limitations of their special subject-matter, and to refuse to base their theory of the universe only on material elements and physical processes, is sometimes very foolishly called 'the bankruptcy of science.' What an extraordinary misuse of a term is here! Science bankrupt —at a moment when the splendour of its

[1] I have elsewhere given my reasons for coming to prefer this *rationale* of the miraculous to that which concerns itself only with the miracles of Christ and regards them as the 'natural' manifestations of His higher nature—which represents a new 'level' attained in creation, just as life does in its relation to the non-vital, or reason to the non-rational. See *Belief in God*, p. 244.

achievement is the chief glory of our race! Is it 'bankruptcy' to take accurate stock of our resources, and to refuse to contract obligations which they do not enable us to meet, while gloriously fulfilling those which they really cover? That is not bankruptcy, but the assurance against bankruptcy. Would to God that the theologians had always imitated this reserve or modesty of recent exponents of science! Let all who desire to praise God for humanity, recognize to the full the glory of science and scientific method, and its devotion to truth, in which it does not shrink from the extremest sacrifices. And in particular let us, as theologians, recognize the debt we owe to biology for bringing into prominence the category of development by evolution. The Bible was not given to teach us science, and it simply accepts the science of its time; it knows nothing of physical evolution. But there are features in the Bible, especially the account it gives us of the slow and gradual self-disclosure of God and His gradual education of mankind, which, as some of the Christian Fathers perceived, seem to cry out for a theory of creation by evolution. We must surely recognize that, while it in no way weakens the grounds for belief in God, it gives us a far more adequate and satisfying conception of divine method than the old scientific dogma

of special creations, to which the theologians of the Renaissance unfortunately committed themselves.

There are, however, three particular points in the supposed conflict of religion and science to which I would ask special attention.

1. We are constantly told that the Bible always implies the old idea that the sun revolves around a fixed earth, this earth of ours which is the centre of the universe, all the rest of it—sun, moon, stars, etc.—being, as it were, in the train of this world, for the service of which, and especially of man, its lord, the whole fabric was created; and that this whole conception of our world's centrality and man's centrality being gone, the basis of the old religion is gone too.

Now, of course there is *some* truth in this pleading—for, I repeat, God's revelation of Himself is in no respect an anticipation of the sciences. Neither the prophets nor Jesus Christ Himself show any signs whatever of authority to anticipate future discoveries which mankind by its faculties of observation has slowly shown itself capable of making. Therefore, of course, the old astronomy is taken for granted in the Bible. Further, there is no doubt that our attention in the Bible is concentrated upon man upon this earth as the special object of divine solicitude—not indeed

as the highest of God's creatures, for there are 'thrones, dominations, princedoms, virtues, powers,' about which man knows almost nothing, and which may infinitely excel him in capacity—but as the crown of creation here in this world and as possessing a nature so truly akin to God that it has been taken up in Jesus Christ into the very being of God Himself. This is at the core of the spiritual message of the Book. Is it affected by scientific discovery? we have to ask. Now, we may shudder, with Pascal, before the unimaginable vastness of astronomic spaces. We may imagine them peopled with intelligent spirits, as we please. But of this science can teach us nothing. And what we think about the universe must depend upon what we can *know*. Within the purview of our knowledge of nature, then, man, as the only rational being who can intelligently co-operate with a divine purpose and can be taken up into conscious union with God—man, I say, remains the centre and culmination of creation, as science views it, just as he is represented in the Christian religion. As to what lies beyond—'we know' but 'in part,' and 'the more part of God's works are among hidden things.'[1]

2. There is a great deal of 'vain talking,' in which our modernist friends not very wisely

[1] Ecclus. xvi. 21 (Greek).

delight, about original Christianity being committed to what is called the 'three-storeyed' view of the universe, as consisting of three physical layers—the earth in the middle, heaven above, and hell beneath. And we are told that, inasmuch as the clauses in the Creed about the Lord's descent into Hades and ascent to heaven were expressed in terms of this old idea, now that it is abandoned, the Creeds in their literal sense have been altogether or in large part superannuated.[1] This argument, again, has a certain measure of truth. It is true that this 'three-storeyed' idea prevailed among the mass of men in the ancient days, and that the Bible language sometimes suggests it, and that popular theology was content with it. But I claim the assent of sane minds to three statements: first, that though popular thought satisfied itself with such crude physical conceptions, the thinking minds of antiquity did not, nor the best Christian thinkers. Plato had familiarized the ancient Greek and Roman world with the value of the myth, not as a substitute for real knowledge or for reasonable opinion, but as the only instrument by which we can conceive of or teach things which lie outside exact

[1] For quotations see *Belief in Christ*, p. 320. Dr. Inge also is very much given to pressing this point. See Addit. Note, p. 206.

knowledge or human experience, such as heaven or hell. And the educated Alexandrian Jews and the Christians profited by this Platonic suggestion. Thus when St. Paul, for instance, repeatedly insists that we Christians are now 'in heaven' or 'in the heavenlies,' and when the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says that we have already come to the heavenly Jerusalem,[1] they make it quite plain that they do not think of heaven as merely a local tract above the sky. St. Paul, we notice, shows us elsewhere that he can distinguish between facts of actual experience which we can insist upon as true, even in detail—like the corporal resurrection of Jesus—and the things which lie outside present experience about which we can only learn 'in a riddle' or 'symbol.' When, again, the Fathers generally insist that the clause in the Creed which tells of Christ 'sitting at the right hand of God' is symbolical or allegorical, they witness to the same distinction. When, once more, Jerome tells us explicitly that those who spoke of heaven as if it were literally a place above the blue vault in which Christ sits on a throne and is attended by messengers in His heavenly court, were 'vain talkers' who do great harm to the Church, he shows to demonstration that those who refused the three-

[1] See Phil. iii. 20; Eph. ii. 6; Heb. xii. 22.

storeyed view of the universe held a secure position in the Church at the time when the Creeds were being formed—for Jerome was rigorously orthodox, and the more philosophical doctors of the Greek Church would have emphasized what he says both about heaven and about Hades.[1] Surely, then, it is not reasonable to suggest that the Christianity of the Creeds is for us, any more than for the Fathers, *bound up with* any special mode of conceiving the structure of the universe.

The second statement which I think ought to be acceptable to reasonable people is this. Those rasher spirits among our modernist brethren are to be condemned who are always making the worst of ancient theology—the worst, I mean, from their own point of view—in order to get a freer hand to treat it in general as antiquated and superseded. That is neither fair-dealing nor truthful speech. And when they twit us with inconsistency because we treat some clauses of the Creed as literal—'He was born of the Virgin' or 'He rose again from the dead'—and others—'He descended into Hades' and 'He sitteth on the right hand of God'—as purely symbolical, and another—'He ascended into heaven'—as the record of an actual event which was itself an acted parable—they are failing to appreciate an

[1] See for quotations *Belief in Christ*, pp. 320–1.

indisputable fact which results in an inevitable distinction. The strength of the Christian religion was grounded on what were claimed to be events in recent experience solidly witnessed to—things seen, gazed upon, heard, and handled—concerning the birth, the life, the death, the corporal resurrection, and the final disappearance by ascension of a historical person, Jesus of Nazareth. With the historical testimony we shall occupy ourselves later. These events were preached by the Church and recorded in the Creed as historical events. But with regard to what at present lies outside possible human experience we can only be taught in language which is symbolical, that is, language which expresses in vivid pictures what transcends present human faculty. The intelligent Fathers knew that as well as we do; and part of the language of the Creed is thus inevitably symbolical in character.

And this third point is to be noticed. Still to-day, after all the centuries during which we have recognized that Copernicus and Galileo discovered the truth about the relation of our planet to the sun, we still, without the slightest disposition to alter our language, speak of the motions of the sun and moon, not as we scientifically know them to be, but as they appear relatively to our vision—because, as seen by us, the sun and moon still rise and set.

Nor are we in the least likely to cease to talk about the *solid* earth or to alter our conduct towards solid bodies, because the physicists have represented what we call solids as really 'mostly emptiness' or 'like a swarm of flies.'[1] The sun rising and setting over the solid surface of the earth represents the experience by which we live, and which governs our common speech. Further, we still, by what appears to be a necessity, express moral ideas in physical metaphors. We talk of 'loftier' and 'baser' men, of a 'higher' world and a 'lower' world, of 'upward' and 'downward' tendencies in civilization, with the same inevitable picturesqueness as when men held the 'three-storeyed' view of the universe for true. Thus still to-day the acted parable of the ascension of our Lord is the only visible form in which the real glorification of Christ could be expressed to the imagination of man. Let us then take it for granted that when we say our Lord 'descended into Hades' we mean no more than that He, in His human spirit, like all other human spirits, went into the unseen world (that is St. Gregory of Nyssa's phrase); and that when we say 'He ascended into heaven' we refer to a vision actually seen by the apostles which was intended to express through all ages to the imagination of men His

[1] Eddington, *op. cit.* p. 189, cf. (in this book) p. 206.

exaltation into the divine glory, which is in its actual conditions to us unknowable or indescribable.

3. The third ground on which the plea of an essential antagonism between the teaching of orthodox Christianity and the teaching of the natural sciences is maintained lies in their respective positions about the origin of mankind and its history. This antagonism is popularly represented in an extreme form thus : ' Evolutionary science represents man as having started at the bottom, in the closest affinity mental and physical with simian ancestors, so that no clear line of distinction can be found between apes and men, and then slowly through hundreds of thousands of years climbed upwards to his present position, from which he can look forward to yet unimagined progress ; while the Christian theology represents man as having had his origin a very few thousand years ago in one man and one woman, suddenly created and placed in a state of perfection in a glorious paradise, who shortly fell into disgrace through a sin of disobedience which infected the whole race, so that his whole subsequent record is a record of decadence.' Now, I think we shall on examination find that any such statement of antagonism between science and religion requires so much reduction on both sides of the account that the actual

antagonism vanishes and all you are left with is the statement of two distinct points of view, by no means irreconcilable.

This will appear. But first of all let us continue to publish the abandonment by the Church of an untenable position to which mediæval and later Christianity often unfortunately committed itself, viz. that—in spite of all appearances to the contrary which were quite evident to some of the educated Fathers—the early chapters of Genesis record literal history. This is a position which is now quite untenable. Let it be as publicly abandoned as possible. Let us return to the position of some of the Fathers that what we have here is not history but 'ideas' or 'doctrines in the form of a story.' From these stories or visions we are intended to learn that there is only one God, the creator of heaven and earth; that He is good and His purpose good and His creation good; that the source of evil lies not in matter but in sin—that is, the rebellion of free wills; that sin breeds misery and death for the man who commits it and for his successors. Thus we should regard Adam and Eve not as historical individuals but as Man and Woman—as Everyman. We have need to think out all the consequences of this change of position and adapt all our popular teaching to it. And it is not so much an

innovation as a return to a position which sometimes received expression in the early centuries of the Church.

On the other hand, we have to recognize the limitations in the account which science can give us of human origins. It cannot doubt that mankind—our present race—emerged out of an animal ancestry; but the circumstances of its origin are hidden in perhaps unpenetrable night. How far it was gradual and how far it was sudden, science is not informed. But it cannot doubt that in possessing a power of forming general conceptions, and purposes based upon such conceptions, and a sense of beauty and of developing moral obligation, and an idea of its relation to God or gods—endowments on which its progress has depended—mankind is broadly distinguished from animals and represents a new level in creation, such as life represents by comparison with inorganic creation; and science with all the knowledge at present at its disposal cannot connect the higher level with the lower, or indicate how or under what conditions animal passed into man.

Now let us try to restate the scientific account of man. 'Mankind emerges out of the darkness with evident marks of a simian ancestry but with very distinctive qualities differentiating him, especially mentally, from

the apes. Of the emergence of these qualities, which account for his whole subsequent career, science is not able at present to give any account, any more than of the emergence of the qualities of life in the inorganic world. Of man's subsequent career on the planet we have a partial record which enables us to discern at times a line of marked progress, but a line which covers only a comparatively narrow region in the whole picture and which is itself subject to constant vicissitude. It is marked by catastrophes as obvious as its successes; and deteriorations as obvious as advances. Science, in Huxley's words, "encourages no millennial expectations," and has no power to anticipate whether mankind will rise to greater heights or sink and fail and perish.' It is such a grey picture which, I think, is all that real science warrants.

Now, what is the account which religion gives of man? It is this: 'Man was made for fellowship with God and glad co-operation with God. In such co-operation he was to find assurance of blessedness, of human fellowship, and of life eternal. Nothing alienates him from this true life but sin—rebellion against God. But he has sinned most widely and persistently; and sin has robbed him of blessing, broken the bonds of fellowship, and disordered his life, and this disorder and cor-

ruption of his nature is found in experience to be universal and somehow to cling to the succession of generations. But the true Man, who is also incarnate God, Jesus Christ our Lord, offers him redemption, frees him from sin, and restores him to fellowship divine and human. And as man now stands every single person born into the world needs this redemption. He needs to pass by a spiritual re-birth from the Old Man (the humanity of ordinary experience) to the New.'

Such a message is surely no contradiction to what science has to say about man. Science has no business to say that the actual history of man is the only history that could have been. The conscience of man accepts the verdict of the Bible that the actual history has been a parody of the divine intention. Our deepest experience confirms the teaching of the prophets and of our Lord that it is sin that blasts human welfare and that no external changes of government or circumstance, and no accessions to our knowledge, can really restore man to blessedness—nothing short of redemption from sin. That is the message of the Old Testament and the New. And the story of man's creation and of man's fall is, if not the history of an individual Adam and individual Eve, at least the true story of Mankind and of Everyman in respect of his

divinely given capacity and of the ruin and loss always being wrought by wilfulness. The universal Fall and the Redemption—equally universal in intention—remain the facts which must be recognized. It is Mankind in the mass and in the sequence of generations which appears as fallen and ruined by sin—that is the old Adam; and the second Adam, the head of the redeemed race, is at hand to save him. This is the substance of Christian theology[1]—and of St. Paul's theology; and it loses nothing of its real force if we recognize in the stories of Genesis not a literal history, but a true vision of man as God made him and of man as he has made himself, conveyed in the form of an unforgettable story.

That is my point, then. One who believes that the Bible gives us the record of a real self-disclosure of God to man; who reverently studies that record and receives its message as the word of God in faith, and joins himself in responsive action to the great company of the faithful who have 'set to their seal that God is true'—such a man will in the result find himself not only morally free but intellectually free also in the world of scientific knowledge.

[1] We need to remember (see *Lux Mundi*, pp. 393–5) that ancient Fathers definitely affirmed that man was not created in full development, but only in a condition to advance freely; and that physical death was natural to man as to the animals before him.

I would say then—let yourselves be possessed with an enthusiasm for the faith and with an enthusiasm also for knowledge, from whatever source it comes, provided it be real knowledge, and you will find that 'all things are yours'—that there is no knowledge which human effort has been able to win concerning this mysterious universe which, on the basis of your Christian faith in God and in man, you cannot fearlessly appropriate and make your own.[1]

[1] On the idea of the Fall of Man as pre-mundane or pre-natal see additional note p. 196.

[The doctrine of the Fall is treated at greater length in *Belief in Christ*, chap. ix.]

## LECTURE IV

# THAT THE CHRISTIAN FAITH AS HISTORICAL RESTS UPON A SOUND BASIS OF HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

**For I received from the Lord that which also I delivered unto you.—1 Cor. xi. 23.**

**For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received.—1 Cor. xv. 3.**

The divine self-disclosure in which the Christian Church bases its faith was given in a historical process of which the record appears in the Old Testament and the New. Its verification lies in great part in spiritual experience—the age-long and world-wide experience of the Church which is also the personal experience of innumerable individuals. But all this body of spiritual experience has continually appealed to and been bound up with historical events. As regards the earlier series of events which are recorded in the Old Testament, their importance is chiefly prophetic. The essential point is that God in His providence chose and guarded Israel among the nations to be the preparatory instrument of His redemptive purpose for mankind, and that a certain

doctrine about God and His character and His purpose was in fact communicated to the world, in many parts and in many manners, through a series of centuries by the Hebrew prophets. That general fact is indisputable, and its truth does not depend upon the accuracy of the record of any single event. But the New Testament claims to be the record of fulfilment—of how God's disclosure of Himself was fulfilled in a historical person, Jesus of Nazareth, believed to be the incarnate Son of God. Everything depends on whether this single person did live, and did so teach and work as is recorded of Him, and did so die upon the Cross, and was so raised from the dead, and did so pass to the throne of God and send down His Spirit upon the Church. This series of particular facts passed into the Creed of the Church. The Church not only witnessed to the doctrines but appealed to the facts—what God had actually done in human history. It staked its all upon this appeal. If its appeal is not verified, if the alleged facts, some of them supernatural or miraculous, can be shown to be untrue or improbable—to be no more than a reflection of the credulity of the disciples—the credit of the Gospel would be infinitely weakened. Christianity from its origin appealed to facts, and to the bar of history, as well as of general spiritual experience, it must go.

And the judge—that is, historical science—is, it must be acknowledged, a new judge, sitting in a new court, demanding to hear the case afresh. The question, in other words, is in great measure a new question, for the science of history is a fairly new science; and that we must not allow ourselves to forget. It is only quite recently that men have had the opportunity of studying, on the great scale of the world, the story of religion as a whole, and the story of civilization. It is only quite lately that the decipherment of dead languages and the study of inscriptions and papyruses and the comparative and critical study of documents have transformed history. And because Christianity is in a unique sense a historical religion—because, as we have recognized, its faith in God and its confident hope for man depend, if not altogether yet in great measure, on certain historical events connected with Jesus of Nazareth and on the trustworthiness of certain historical documents—it was almost inevitable that there should have arisen a painful conflict between traditional religious convictions and the new historical criticism. For, in spite of their great endowments, the teachers of the Middle Ages, and of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation, had been quite uncritical in their estimate of the evidence. The beginnings of criticism in the

Renaissance period had hardly ventured to approach the Bible. Thus the story of the past as related in the religious tradition was easily shown up by the New Criticism as antiquated—just like the story of the past as related in every branch of traditional history. Accordingly it required rewriting. And the new science, like all new sciences, was scornful and arrogant and destructive. Recently, no doubt, historical science, like the physical sciences, has become, on the whole, more modest, more respectful of ancient tradition, and less confident in its generalizations. But still, historical criticism, as it confronts us to-day, in the persons of many of its chief European exponents, is found, in dealing with the origins of Christianity, to be making a claim which is deeply subversive of the Christian Creed.

What is this claim? Fundamentally it is, I think, this: that historical science, properly so called, will not allow us to acknowledge as fact, as a real event, any occurrence or group of occurrences which the order of nature, including of course the evolution of man, cannot account for, or which cannot be interpreted as its natural product—so that the Jesus of history, whatever the documents may say, must be made to appear as a purely human figure reduced to the measures of the

prophet or the man of genius, such as history recognizes as familiar, and supposes itself able to account for.

This claim, we observe, made on behalf of scientific history, is analogous to the claim formerly made on behalf of the physical sciences, much more confidently and generally than to-day, that science cannot allow for the emergence of anything in living beings essentially new, anything which physics and chemistry cannot account for, or anything in rational man which cannot be accounted for as the natural outcome of the mental faculties of animals, and in particular that science cannot admit of free will in man or miraculous acts of God which proceed, as it were, from above, from outside the settled order of nature. It is just in the same spirit of exclusiveness that historical science is apt to say: 'I have surveyed human history, and from the vast record of experience I have gathered certain canons of the credible and incredible, the admissible and inadmissible, and they are so strongly verified in experience, and so closely linked on to the whole of the postulates of science, that when I am confronted with the records of Jesus I am bound to allow for exaggerations, such as occur wherever a great man has become a popular idol, and for strictly historical purposes to reduce His stature

to properly human proportions. The Jesus of history must conform to history. I cannot admit evidence of the supernatural and the miraculous.'

Now, it is very easy to see at once that—like the similar claim once made on behalf of science—this sort of claim on behalf of history is enormously exaggerated. The historian cannot really get anywhere near to the position of the prophet authorized to tell us what can be or cannot be in the future, or what can or cannot have been in the past. It cannot, in fact, in dealing with past history, *account for* the genius who in a measure introduces a new light into human darkness or a new direction into human life. It cannot account for Zoroaster or Plato or Shakespeare at their best. But this question of the genius is only a kind of preliminary skirmish. Christianity is bound to present the problem in a deeper form. For the Christian believer, from St. Paul downward, has 'known in whom he has believed,' and has recognized in Jesus something which the ordinary course of history may have pointed to but cannot have produced. He appeared, according to the belief of the Christian Church, not only as the product of history but as its Lord. He is the A and the Ω, the first and the last, the eternal Son and Wisdom of God, the Creator of all that is,

who in 'the fulness of the times,' that is, at a certain climax of history, came down from heaven and was incarnate and made man. Thus He appeared in history, and submitted to historical limitations, but He was all the time something more than a man—something transcendent and eternal. Such a claim is of the essence of Christianity. There is no 'like case' to that of Jesus of Nazareth.

While we affirm this, however, we must be careful not to exaggerate it. To use the modern phrase, the transcendent is also the immanent; and the course of history has all along been a reflection and expression of the eternal. So it was not out of relation to past history that the Christ appeared. He who came as a Jew cannot be accounted for without all that is represented by Jewish history; nor could His religion have made its way as it did in the world without the preparation which lay in the assimilation by the Jew of elements of Persian and Greek thought, or without the unification of the world in the Roman Empire, or without the Platonic and Stoic philosophies, or without the influence of the mystery-cults. It was in 'the fulness of the times' that Jesus came, and there was a divine preparation in the long tracts of history for His coming. Nevertheless, He was more than a historical person. What He expresses

is not only the outcome of the course of history, but a really unique Act of God, doing what could only be done once and for all. Man needed to be redeemed from the universal tyranny of sin; and the divine order of the world needed for its restoration from the disorder caused by sin a new creative action of God, which action at its central point was the incarnation of the eternal Son. History may be seen to point to such an event. It may even be said to have a 'tendency towards it.'[1] But it cannot be said to have a tendency to produce it. Christ is essentially supernatural and super-historical, as interpreted by Christian faith from the beginning. Therefore the sort of historical science which quite frankly treats the occurrence of the supernatural or the miraculous as incredible (whatever the evidence) is the irreconcilable foe of the Christian faith. Just then as we cannot make terms with a physical science which would exclude the possibility of freedom, or of a God the Creator of the world whose resources are not exhausted in its normal order, so we can make no terms with a historical

[1] See Dr. Edward Talbot's essay in *Lux Mundi* on 'The Preparation in History,' pp. 109 ff. See also Mr. Richard Hanson's admirable articles in the *Church Quarterly* of April 1922 and 1923 on 'Anglicanism and Modern Thought' and 'History and the Historic Jesus.'

science—so called—which cannot find room for the supernatural Christ and is bound to explain Him away. This sort of 'science,' physical or historical, we must regard as extravagant — as exceeding its legitimate boundaries; because it claims to have so complete a knowledge of the forces at work in the universe and in history as to be able to exclude certain evidence, however strong, in virtue of a dogma that such and such a kind of event cannot happen or cannot have happened. Nevertheless, what we ask for is not any opposite dogmatic assumption—that such and such an event must have happened, nor any claim that our Gospels are infallible documents free from all mistakes—but simply open-mindedness to the evidence, and the frank recognition that history, if it attempts to dictate what can or cannot occur, is quite going beyond its proper authority. Its function is to criticize documents and estimate evidence and interpret events; not to dictate.

Of course when I speak of this unjustifiable claim made on behalf of historical science I must not allow you to forget that both in the last and in the present generation there have been many historians, some of them of the first rank in our own country, such as Stubbs and Creighton, Figgis and Acton, or such as

Duchesne[1] and others on the Continent, who, as being both great critical historians and also, by conviction, orthodox Christians, would have quite dissented from the claim to exclude from history on *a priori* grounds the supernatural and the miraculous. But the claim is either plainly made or silently implied by a great number of the continental writers who have contributed to European history 'critical' accounts of the origin of Christianity, widely divergent from one another, and it has—unduly and unreasonably, as I think—affected a good many of our English critics, who, even while affirming the supernatural Christ, and not actually denying the possibility of miracles, do violence to the evidence by throwing doubts on such events having actually occurred, thereby, as appears, plunging the history of Jesus Christ into unmerited confusion and uncertainty.

Now I will try to make a fair statement on the purely critical and historical aspects of our New Testament documents.

Criticism on this subject to-day appears to be outgrowing its hot and violent youth, and

[1] An interesting letter of Duchesne's is quoted in M. Houtin's Biography of Hébert (see above, p. xii), p. 128, which there does not appear to me to be the slightest ground for dismissing as hypocritical, or written in fear of ecclesiastical condemnation, and concealing his real sentiments.

to be becoming more sane and reasonable. I will give a striking example of what I mean. Thus Eduard Meyer, who is, I suppose, the most comprehensive of European scholars in his knowledge of the history of antiquity, has recently turned his attention to the *origin and beginnings of Christendom.* As for theological opinions, he is a thorough rationalist. He does not appear to be able to conceive for a moment of the reality of a supernatural person or a miraculous event. Moreover, he is still something of a novice on the field of Biblical criticism. Nevertheless, he speaks with the greatest authority on matters of ancient history and the value of its documents, and he has immersed himself in the Christian documents and the vast literature of New Testament criticism which has appeared especially in Germany during the last ten years. And we note that he finds himself dissatisfied with the whole tone of this literature. He finds its authors constantly taking their unproved hypotheses for facts, and allowing their judgement on what the facts must have been (*Sachkritik*) to pervert their judgement on the documents and their meaning.[1]

This fundamental error he himself avoids.

[1] See *Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums*, vol. i (1924), Vorwort p. x and p. 189. The complaint is constantly renewed through his three volumes.

For example, he concludes his own examination of St. Mark's Gospel thus: 'The conclusion we have won is of the highest importance. It is evident that for our knowledge of the history of Jesus we have by no means to reckon merely with representations of the second, subapostolic, generation, but are taken back far behind that into the midst of the first generation who personally had known Him intimately (*genau*) and still preserved a lively recollection of Him; and that these oldest recollections lie under our eye in manifold forms. There is no ground at all for refusing to accept these oldest traditions as historically trustworthy in all essentials, and in their chronological ordering of the history.'[1] Thus in particular he claims that we must accept as trustworthy the tradition which Papias delivers to us, that St. Mark was the author of the second Gospel and that he had been the companion and interpreter (*Dolmetscher*) of Peter in his missionary journeyings,[2] so that 'it is obvious that the foundation of our tradition goes back to Peter,' and that Mark in a great part of his Gospel[3] was reproducing St. Peter's own memories as to how things happened at the beginning—how Jesus acted and spoke—as Peter gave them to his converts. What is not

[1] pp. 146–7. [2] p. 158.
[3] 'In weitem Umfang,' p. 159.

due to Peter personally Meyer ascribes mostly to a document emanating from the church at Jerusalem in its first days. Again, Meyer accepts the tradition which makes Luke, the physician and companion of St. Paul, the author of the one work divided into two parts —the third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles; and he will have us recognize in Luke's work 'one of the most important historical works which remain to us from antiquity.'[1] Once more he accepts generally St. Paul's Epistles as genuine—only suspending his judgement on the Ephesians, and recognizing historical and genuine elements in the Pastoral Epistles; and he lays great stress on St. Paul's references to the tradition he had 'received' and which he delivered to his converts—of which he says, 'Whether it was I or they [the Twelve], so we preached, and so ye believed.' He will not admit a doubt that the 'fast formulated tradition,' which St. Paul gives of the institution of the Eucharist and of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus was what he received immediately on his conversion at Damascus and in his subsequent visit to Jerusalem, where also he found already a record of the words of the Lord to which he sometimes refers as of final authority—as an end of controversy.

Now, of course Meyer's subsequent treatment

[1] p. viii.

of the evidence will seem violent and unjustifiable to anyone who does not, as he does, exclude from the field of the real everything supernatural. And critics will reasonably dispute his analysis of documents—for instance, his analysis of St. Mark. All I am putting to you is this—it is a fact of great importance that a man of unrivalled authority on the field of ancient history should thus demand of the world of scholars that they should accept the Gospel of St. Mark and St. Luke's writings and the great bulk of the Epistles of St. Paul as being in fact what the tradition of the Church has represented them as being. And if we set about rebuilding the structure of our faith on critical lines we had better base our fabric in the main on these materials only and generally leave out of consideration to start with the materials supplied by the first and the fourth Gospels. For the second and third Gospels, with the Acts of the Apostles and St. Paul's Epistles, give us foundation enough; and with regard to all these documents the conclusion of Meyer is much the same as that of Harnack.

Of course no such conclusion will satisfy everyone. M. Loisy will still be extravagant and his extravagances will find echoes at home. But where we find men like Meyer and Harnack, of pre-eminent authority as historians, whose

prejudices are all against accepting tradition too readily, reaching, with regard to the foundation documents of Christianity, substantially the same conclusions as, for instance, our own scholar, Dr. Headlam, and when we, who cannot claim to be experts in historical criticism, find these conclusions eminently reasonable, we shall feel that we have reached solid ground at last.

It remains for us, then, to advance upon this ground—only without that sort of dogmatic rationalism which makes it necessary for the German scholars whom I have named to treat the evidence of the documents so violently.

The earliest documents are St. Paul's admitted Epistles, written—let us say—between A.D. 48 and 61. In them we get the most vivid picture of the Churches embraced in St. Paul's mission, clear insight into the nature of the tradition he delivered to them, and a comprehensive view of his whole mind and teaching. The subsequent history of the Church shows us that one very prominent controversial element in St. Paul's teaching as given in his Epistles—all that concerns the justification of the sinner and the relation of grace to law—was not fully understood by his contemporaries or immediate successors, and never really got hold of the early Church either in East or West. But, besides this

matter of controversy, we get a mass of doctrine assumed as outside controversy; and, when we examine it in detail, we find that—with the single exception of the article of our Lord's virginal conception[1]—the whole of what we call the Apostles' Creed is there, and, beyond that, such a conception of the eternal Son, as before His Incarnation the partner of all the activities of God and the sharer of His being, as justifies the clauses of the Nicene Creed. It is all there in St. Paul, both statements of fact and statements of doctrine, assumed and taken for granted as outside controversy. And we note particularly how St. Paul reminds the Corinthians that all he had 'delivered' to them about the sacrificial death, and burial, and resurrection of our Lord the third day from the dead, and His subsequent appearances, and what He had taught them about the institution of the Eucharist—which, as St. Paul interprets it, involves so much—all this was part of what he had 'received,' that is, when he was converted, and was common to him therefore with the Twelve. Of course all this has been

[1] Of which it must be said that it is thoroughly congruous with what St. Paul does say about the second Adam; and that St. Luke, his companion, probably learnt about it in Palestine before St. Paul's captivity in Rome—in which case St. Paul can hardly have been finally ignorant of it. See *Belief in God*, p. 275.

wrangled over and denied; but I dare to say that no unsophisticated person who advances upon the field of St. Paul's teaching with an open mind, will be able to doubt that the traditional Creed of the Church concerning Christ and the Holy Spirit is there in substance and almost in form, and is supported in different ways in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and in the Gospel and Epistles which bear the name of St. John, with differences which are not really significant except for a rather minute theology. Nor, though there is much *less* theology, is there any different theology, in the Apocalypse or St. Peter's Epistle or St. James's.[1]

The Creed of the Church has been substantially the same, then, since the days of St. Paul. Can it be said to be his construction? In the sense that he laid down the lines of the theology of the Church, we should say—yes. In the preaching of the earliest years at Jerusalem, as witnessed to in the record of the Acts, the minds of the Apostles appear to be concentrated upon one thought—that the promised Christ is Jesus of Nazareth; that in Him and in His death and resurrection the forecast of prophecy is fulfilled; that God vindicated Him in His resurrection and ascension, to which it is their

[1] All this is argued at greater length in *Belief in Christ*, chaps. iii and iv.

special business to bear personal witness; that now He is exalted to supreme lordship at the right hand of God, and is the object of worship, and is to come to judge the quick and the dead. Their minds were not then apparently occupied with any other consideration. But obviously for strict monotheists their position demanded explanation. How could they worship a man and ascribe divine functions to Him? There was no explanation apparently possible for believers in one God except St. Paul's, which, it seems, the Church generally accepted.

Whence did he get it? Why did the Church so instinctively accept it? St. Paul certainly would have repudiated originality. It would seem that to St. Paul it was all involved in the idea of Jesus as in a proper and unique sense the Son of God, on whose sonship ours is based, through whom alone it can be restored or renewed. That Jesus was the Son of God in this supreme sense was vindicated according to St. Paul by the divine act which raised Him from the dead. But he seems to take it for granted that this is what He claimed to be. I do not see any reasonable explanation of St. Paul's confident position unless, even perhaps before he was converted, he knew that Jesus claimed in this sense divine sonship, and, when he was converted, this is what he at once acknowledged. This

was his first confession, 'Immediately he preached Jesus in the synagogues that He is the Son of God.' God's purpose in calling him, he tells the Galatians, was to reveal His Son through him to the world.[1]

Thus we get to one of the root questions. To a reasonable open-minded man, do the Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke, to go no further, assert and imply this properly divine claim on the part of Jesus Himself? There are solemn utterances of Jesus—the solemn words about the exclusive mutual knowledge of the Father and the Son—that no man knoweth the Son save the Father, or the Father save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him—the profession that even He, the Son, has not in the days of His flesh the map of the remoter future spread before His eyes—where He speaks of the Son seemingly as above the angels—and the parable of the vineyard where He seems to distinguish Himself as the only Son from all the prophets who were but servants. These utterances imply something more than a Messianic office.[2] But it is not so much to particular utterances that I would refer you as to the whole impression made by Jesus of superhuman authority, quite as certainly as of real humanity. That

[1] Gal. i. 15–16. See Lightfoot's note.

[2] See *Belief in Christ*, p. 90.

is the rational ground of all faith in Jesus: that we have a real record of what He was when He was on earth in the days of His flesh and of the impression made on His first disciples; and that as we read that record we find ourselves brought to our knees before the figure of the Son of Man—for quite certainly we find there one truly human but in that humanity more than human; speaking with an authority, making a claim on men's souls, which is greatly different from that of any prophet, an authority which is God's own authority, a claim which is God's exclusive claim—a claim which, if it were not really that, would surely represent an overweening arrogance.

The Gospel of Mark was overwhelmed in the estimate of the Church by the completer character of the other Gospels. But recently we have learned to see its incomparable value. It is homely and rugged in style; but vivid so that it forces us to feel ourselves eye-witnesses of things as they actually happened. We know who John Mark was—how he was brought up in his mother's house at Jerusalem, which was the centre or a centre of the apostolic fellowship, and how he became the companion of his cousin Barnabas and of Paul, and afterwards the companion and interpreter of Peter, and finally the loved and trusted associate of Peter and Paul in the last days

at Rome. And as we read his little book we feel that the early tradition is true and that Peter stands behind him and it is Peter's story he is recording. Then we read Luke's lucid and unpretentious preface to his two volumes; we note his insistence on first-hand evidence and on accuracy, and we observe how in the course of his narrative he mentions individuals such as Joanna the wife of Chusa, Herod's steward, and Manaen, Herod's foster-brother, and the women companions of Mary the mother, and Philip the Evangelist, and Mnason, the original disciple, and Rhoda, the maid at Mary's house, and John Mark, the son of the house, with whom he either certainly was brought in contact or easily may have been, who could have supplied him with the special information which his books contain at first hand, before he himself became the eye-witness of what he relates; and we take account of the remarkable confirmations which at many points—where its accuracy used to be doubted—his narrative has received from archæological discovery. Surely these two stories, Mark's and Luke's, present good credentials, external and internal.

Surely, again, it is not possible to ascribe, to any important extent, to invention or imagination the portraiture of Jesus. We observe that even the geniuses of later European

romance have failed remarkably in conceiving and presenting the male saint—the spotless character. He is either as colourless as he is blameless, as he is a prig, or he is almost imbecile, or else he turns out not to be at all blameless after all. And neither Mark nor Luke show the signs of romantic genius. Their skill is that of faithful recorders. Is it conceivable that the portrait they paint should not be even in its details taken from the life —that marvellous portrait of one at once so human and so divine, so loving and lovable, and yet so awful? The Gospels, we must also remember, were written by men who had lived through all early struggles and controversies of the Church, such as St. Paul's Epistles bare witness to. If they had given scope to imagination, should we not have had a story which would have borne evident marks of being produced to meet the needs of the later Church? But in fact how faint are the traces of such later interests. How disinterested the Gospels appear.

I do not want to exaggerate their accuracy. It is quite possible that Mark got the account of the Miraculous Feeding of the Five Thousand with its estimate of numbers from Peter, and then from some other source an almost identical narrative with different numbers, which he mistook for the record of a different event.

It is quite possible that there was some mistake about the exact part which Jesus played in the incident of the Gadarene swine. Such mistakes are constantly made even by careful eye-witnesses. It is quite possible, again, that in the document which St. Mark seems to have used containing our Lord's prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem and of the end of the world there was already some confusion or misunderstanding. Judging Mark's record simply as a historical record, we cannot exclude such minor mistakes. But such legitimate questioning of details does not in any way justify such complete rewriting of the records as would be necessary to eliminate the 'nature miracle' from the story of the Feeding of the Multitude, or our Lord's prophecy of the destruction of the Temple and of Jerusalem in the early future.

It is quite true that devout and credulous people, Jewish, pagan, and Christian, in most ages have been over-ready to believe miracles, and that most records of miracles are for various reasons unconvincing. But there is no justification for saying that because most records of miracles are not such as warrant our laying stress upon them, therefore there are none that do warrant it. Certainly when you take account of the evidence of our Lord's miracles, and, most of all, of the evidence of His resur-

rection, you are led to the conclusion that the kind of methods used to disparage it would avail to explain away the certain facts of history. No doubt history can never be demonstrative. You can find a way to doubt almost anything in any record. But it is not by legitimate methods. And when you take account of the whole supernatural impression made by our Lord on those about Him, and the place which miraculous control of nature, intertwined inextricably with words marked by profound spiritual authority, took in producing that impression, or when you estimate fairly the total evidence of the resurrection, you are bound to recognize that in making your act of faith in the Jesus of the Gospels, though it remains an act of faith, you are behaving as a reasonable person when you make it.[1] Conversely, if you refuse to believe in the occurrence of anything miraculous, you are so fully discrediting the narrative that thereafter you may freely accept what you will and reject what you will, according to a very fallible sense of what is probable. And in fact the extraordinary diversity in the pictures of the 'historical Jesus' presented by the

[1] The whole of this argument is to be found in greater fullness in *Belief in God*, chaps. viii, x, xi—as regards the evidence of the Resurrection and the Virginal Conception and Ascension, pp. 262–82—and in *Belief in Christ*, chap. ii.

various critics or schools of critics, who start by declining the miraculous, shows sufficiently clearly that, starting on that basis, the conclusions they reach are in a very high degree arbitrary.

You will observe that I am not asking anyone to ignore the teachings of critical history. I do not want you to be 'Fundamentalists,' whose dogmatic belief in the infallibility of the Scriptures—which is not a dogmatic requirement of the Church Catholic—blinds them to what seem to be the legitimate conclusions of criticism. I do not, on the other hand, want you to be like Romanists, who ask for the same faith in the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin—which can claim no historical evidence whatever—as for the Resurrection of our Lord or His Virginal Birth, for which in different degrees we can claim cogent evidence. I would have you ask for good evidence for any historical event claimed to be 'of faith.' But at the same time I would have you realize that historical evidence is never demonstrative. If we are to accept it, there must always be in our minds some sense of probability—some sense of a world order into which the event can fit. Thus, no doubt, to accept the evidence of the Gospels we need a readiness to believe in the idea of God the Creator as being also God the Re-

deemer—we need some sense of man as a sinner against God, and of sin as having so disturbed the world as to require some redemptive and recreative act of God. But it is just this sort of sense of probability which the ordinary experience of a good man is surely calculated to supply. And it makes him as good a judge of what is probable as the philosopher or the man of science as such. And my contention is that if we have minds open to the idea of divine redemption we shall find the Gospel narrative convincing; and that it is not we but the negative critics who do violence to the evidence. Of historical criticism then, properly so called, we have no reason to be afraid. We can only be grateful for all the light with which it is supplying us.

## LECTURE V

# THAT THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION FROM ITS START WAS THE RELIGION OF A SACRAMENTAL CHURCH

**How men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, pillar and stay of the truth.—1 Tim. iii. 15.**

In the Old Testament we hear of a 'glory' of the invisible God, half hidden under a cloud, which abode above the cherubim in the holiest place of the tabernacle and of Solomon's Temple, and which at certain moments made itself more widely manifest. And in the New Testament books there are passages where this 'Shekinah,' as it was called, is taken as a sort of foretaste of the Incarnation, when, veiled in our flesh, 'the Glory' of God, His Word or Son, tabernacled among men.[1] Jesus is the Shekinah or 'the Glory'—the manifestation of God among men under a veil. Once more, when He is withdrawn from earth, into the unveiled glory of God, still He is manifested, and His life and action are perpetuated, on earth by His Spirit dwelling in the Church,

[1] See *Belief in Christ*, pp. 120 n. 2, 128 ff.

which is His body. Thus the whole witness of the Bible may be said to be first to God, the eternal and invisible creator and ruler; next to God manifested on earth—in a measure everywhere and finally in Jesus the Christ; next to the glorified Christ manifested and mediated to the world through the Holy Spirit in the Church of the redeemed.

Our Lord was always the perfect and flawless image of the Father in His earthly life, but the Church which is His body has by no means always presented even a tolerable image of Him. His Spirit indeed has always been there; and St. Thomas Aquinas tells us that to believe in the Church means the same as to believe in the Spirit animating the Church. In the darkest days God's Spirit has always been in the Church, and His word preached and His sacraments administered and the 'witness of Jesus' borne by His saints. But it was especially by its corporate life and ethical witness that the Church was meant to manifest Christ in the world. It was to be 'the light of the world'—even as its Master had been—'that men by its good works which they should behold' might at last be won for God. But at times it has, in fact, proved so false in its general and official witness, that men have revolted from it altogether. They could not believe that the Church

which they saw was the body of Christ. Thus they have been led to maintain that the Church of which St. Paul spoke such glorious things was not the corrupt Church which they saw with their eyes, but an invisible company of the elect known only to God. This doctrine of the invisible Church, which Luther made popular in the sixteenth century, had, of course, a basis of truth, in the sense that the really effective organ of Christ—what Augustine called the ' true body of Christ '—consists of those who are in will and heart the instruments of His purpose, just as under the Old Covenant it was ' the faithful remnant ' which was the true Israel ; but this faithful remnant, whether under the Old Covenant or under the New, are only the true exponents of the whole body to which they belong ; and there is no possibility of drawing a dividing line between them, on the one hand, and the less worthy or wholly discreditable members of the Church on the other. Both must ' grow together until the harvest.' And it is now, I think, almost universally agreed that the glorious Church of the Epistle to the Ephesians is the sum of all the members of the local churches, such as those St. Paul writes to in his other epistles, each of these local churches being representative of the Church Catholic.[1] And they are made up,

[1] See *The Holy Spirit and the Church*, pp. 32–4.

as we see, of worthy and unworthy members together, even though the evil livers, when they become notorious, are purged out by excommunication. This, I say, is no longer matter of serious discussion—that in St. Paul's epistles the organ and representative of Christ is the visible Church, the temple of the Holy Spirit and the body of Christ—its sacramental ceremonies, because they are at the same time the covenanted channels of the divine life and also ceremonies of the society, binding the individual into the visible fellowship. The glorious Church of which St. Paul speaks is the very same Church of which we read the early history in the Acts as it spreads from Jerusalem to Rome, of the affairs and anxieties and defects of which St. Paul's different epistles give us so lifelike a picture. There is not in the New Testament anything to warrant a distinction between an invisible Church into which men are predestinated in the secret counsel of God or into which they are admitted by faith only, and the visible churches into which they are admitted by baptism. There is nowhere any idea of merely individual membership of Christ—no idea of faith in Christ to be found in the New Testament which does not involve baptism, or of baptism into Christ which is not also baptism into the one body, carrying with it the obliga-

tions of membership and the acceptance of corporate discipline. As of old in ancient Israel, the new covenant of God is with the 'holy community,' and with the individuals only as members of the community. Thus it is true to say that the attempt has failed to find any point in the history of Christianity short of St. Paul when the 'catholic,' or 'sacramental,' or 'institutional' idea of the Church first began to prevail. Beyond Augustine, beyond Cyprian, beyond Clement and Ignatius, it is pushed back by the plainest indications to the epistles of St. Paul and the records of the Acts. To be 'within the Covenant' is to be within the visible Church.[1]

But there are two questions which are still being vigorously agitated. First, can the establishment of the Church, in the sense of an organized community, continuous with the old and now apostate Israel, be still further pushed back, behind St. Paul and St. Luke, to the very root of Christianity—to the deliberate intention of Christ Himself? And, secondly, if it must be ascribed not to Christ Himself but to the genius of St. Paul especially, is it to be supposed that St. Paul derived his

[1] This position is argued at greater length in *The Holy Spirit and the Church*, chaps. i–iv. On the idea of the 'extension of the Incarnation' by the sacraments of the Church, see Addit. Note below, pp. 212 ff.

idea of the sacramental Church from the Hellenistic mystery religions, so that the spiritual efficacy which he undoubtedly acknowledged in the sacraments of the Church is to be reckoned as only another form of pagan 'magic,' corrupting by its presence the 'spiritual' religion of Jesus Himself?

## I

Have we, then, in our documents, critically treated, adequate grounds for believing that our Lord Jesus Christ, when on earth, deliberately contemplated the establishment of His disciples as an organized and a sacramental community in the world?

The answer to this question depends in part on the trustworthiness of the earlier portion of St. Luke's narrative in the Acts of the Apostles. The Acts is only the second portion of the whole work to which we find the preface at the beginning of the third Gospel. There the author declares that the story he is to tell rests on the tradition delivered by those who 'from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word'; that there have been already many attempts to draw up a narrative of the events, but that he intends to draw up afresh an orderly narrative, because he has 'followed along with all the events accurately from the beginning,' so that 'His

Excellency Theophilus' can rely with confidence upon his record as complementary to what he was taught when he became a Christian. That, apart from what his documents may have contained, Luke had abundant opportunity of consulting original 'eye-witnesses' of the earliest period of the Church's life we know. He was with Philip, one of the original Seven, through the 'many days' of St. Paul's stay at Caesarea before his last visit to Jerusalem; he went up to Jerusalem with Mnason, an 'original disciple,' and lodged with him in Jerusalem apparently for about a fortnight; then he must have been for the 'two full years' with St. Paul during his captivity in Caesarea, and again presumably in intercourse with Philip; then in the Roman captivity he is closely associated with John Mark,[1] who was in his mother's house at Jerusalem, which was apparently the apostolic centre, during the earliest years of the Church's life. He could not have had better informants. And St. Paul also must have had much to tell him; for we should suppose him to have been, while an adversary and persecutor, an acute observer of the new sect, like Campion and Parsons of the Anglican Church in the reign of Elizabeth.

And the account he gives of the earliest

[1] Col. iv. 10, 14; Philem. 24.

preaching of the apostles and the earliest belief and practice of the disciples is highly reassuring as to his accuracy. For of the theology of the Incarnation, into which St. Paul appears to have been the Church's first guide, though it is confirmed in the Gospel record—of this theology there is no trace at all in the early speeches given in the Acts. There is nothing there but the entrancing conception of the glorified Christ—the crucified man now exalted to God's right hand as Lord of all and Judge of quick and dead, the object of worship and the one Name of salvation, who had sent down the Spirit according to His promise to give life and power to His Church. This is the one theme. St. Luke must have been fairly conversant with St. Paul's theology of the Incarnation. But his record of the first preaching shows no traces of it. This is a reassuring sign that what St. Luke describes as original in the Church was really so.

Well, then, what is the state of the earliest Church as presented in the beginning of the Acts ? We find there the Twelve, the apostles, appearing unmistakably as the rulers of the community of believers in Jesus Christ—not in virtue of popular confidence, but by the appointment of the Lord. Their official number—twelve—has at once to be made up by

the appointment of a successor to Judas, and 'the Lord' is appealed to to make the appointment. The control of the community is in their hands: the message of the Church is 'the apostles' teaching'; their authority is unquestioned; 'of the rest' (of the community) 'durst no man join himself to them'[1] as being on the same level. Could all this have been so, if the Lord had not while on earth so far organized His disciples as to give them their twelve rulers? Again, the necessity of admission into the Church by baptism is taken for granted. Could it have been so, if this had not been the command of the Master? In the same way the communication of the Spirit after baptism by the laying on of hands appears, after Pentecost, to be also taken for granted. Should we not, with Dr. Chase,[2] draw a similar conclusion with regard to that?

With regard to the 'breaking of the bread,' the social meal of the community, our assurance of its sacramental character and of its dependence upon the institution of the Lord is still more direct and it comes from St. Paul. The familiar account which he gives us of the institution of the Eucharist by our Lord, at the Last Supper with His disciples, was, he

[1] Acts v. 13. See Rackham, *in loc.*

[2] See Dr. Chase, cited in *The Holy Spirit and the Church* p. 131, n. 1.

assures us, part of the tradition which he 'received,' like the account of the resurrection from the dead of our Lord on the third day and His subsequent appearances—'received,' he must surely mean, at the time of his conversion or at his first visit to Jerusalem, not more than six or nine years after the date of the crucifixion. This account, then, was already part of the formulated tradition of the Jerusalem Church.[1] Moreover, there is no reasonable interpretation of the Lord's startling words but St. Paul's realistic and sacramental interpretation of them: 'The cup which we bless, is it not the communion—the sharing together—in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion—the sharing together—in the body of Christ?' The social meal, or 'love-feast,' of the Christians, we cannot but see, culminates in a sacrament, in which, through the sharing together in the natural food of the one loaf and the one cup, they are made to partake in the supernatural nourishment of the humanity of Christ glorified. And obviously such a rite presupposes the idea of the Church as a community sacramentally bound together in Christ. The institution of such a sacrament, then, St. Paul declares himself to have received ('from the Lord' as its

[1] See *The Holy Spirit and the Church*, p. 54, and *Belie in Christ*, pp. 99 ff.

source) and to have communicated to the churches of his foundation,[1] and this is supported by the Petrine tradition in St. Mark and the Palestinian tradition in the first Gospel. It is pleaded indeed that St. Mark, who presumably derived from St. Peter his narrative of the Last Supper, does not give the words 'This do in remembrance of me.' But it is impossible to imagine that St. Mark, writing his Gospel probably at Rome, after thirty years of the Church's life, or the later author of the first Gospel in Palestine, did not take for granted that the Lord gave the sacramental ordinance to the apostles to be made a constant memorial of Him in the Church. So it had always been.

The testimony of the Acts as to the proceedings and assumptions of the earliest community, taken together with the testimony of St. Paul as to the tradition which he received at his conversion, seems to me to render it historically certain that our Lord deliberately organized His disciples as 'the Church' and bound them together in obedience to the Twelve as their appointed rulers and by sacraments of His foundation. And I prefer to rest my assurance on this evidence, in the first instance, rather than on particular texts

[1] On the various evasions of this conclusion, especially on the shorter text of Luke and on the *Didaché*, see below Additional Note 10, pp. 199 ff.

in the first and fourth Gospels,[1] though, when once this evidence is accepted, it confirms the authenticity of these texts.

But there is another convincing consideration of a general kind to be derived from the Gospels. Our Lord certainly appears there as having come to regard the mass of His people as self-condemned for their refusal of Him, and accordingly to have considered His disciples alone as the true Israel of the future. This is confessedly how the early Christian Church regarded itself. It was the true Israel as against 'Israel after the flesh.' But it is already clearly enough implied in our Lord's parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard. The present rulers of the Jews are there indicated as rejected, and a new control of God's vineyard declared. So in the words 'Fear not, little flock, it is my Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom,' or again in the words to the Twelve, 'Ye also shall sit upon twelve seats, judging the twelve tribes.'[2] But more than that—it is involved in the whole situation. Just as Isaiah finds the true Israel in the faithful remnant of his disciples, and the second Isaiah follows him in his description of the faithful section as the 'servant of Jehovah,' through whom the nation's destiny

[1] Such as Matt. xvi. 18 f. and John xx. 21 f.

[2] See *The Holy Spirit and the Church*, pp. 46 f.

is to be fulfilled, so our Lord, who certainly knew Himself to be the Christ, must have seen in the believers in Him the true Israel. It is this, surely, that accounts for His careful selection and appointment and training of the Twelve to be the 'stewards' of the newly organized household of God, and the authorized carriers of His message. It makes the institution of the apostolate, and the institution of simple rites of fellowship, not merely natural but almost inevitable. It appears to me that to deny to Christ the deliberate institution of the Church, as the old Israel refounded on a new basis, is to throw doubt not merely on particular texts of St. Matthew and St. John, but on the whole historical sequence of events and the witness of all our records.

I have indicated, however, that there are no words assigned to our Lord in the Gospels which rest on evidence at once so early and so definite as the words He is recorded to have spoken at the Last Supper in instituting the sacrament of Holy Communion for His disciples. For they were already part of a formulated tradition of the Church which St. Paul received when he was converted. And among other results which flow from recognizing their trustworthiness is this—it justifies the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the later Church, in the assumption that our Lord's

attitude towards the sacrificial system of the Temple was the same as His attitude towards the moral or social law—'not to destroy, but to fulfil.'

Towards the law as expounded and constantly amplified in the tradition of the scribes, our Lord showed Himself deeply critical; but it appears clearly in St. Paul's epistles, as much as in James's epistle or in the Acts, that though the moral law for the New Israel had been by Christ deepened and made spiritual —though it had become 'a law of liberty'— yet Christians are still 'under law to Christ,'[1] partly as declared by Christ Himself, whose words are occasionally cited as an end of controversy, partly as interpreted and administered by the apostles—that is, by the exercise of the same kind of authority as the scribes of old had so sadly misused. It is this fact—so manifest an element in the life of the Church as St. Paul describes it in his epistles, in spite of all his denunciations and depreciations of legalism—it is this fact which makes it difficult to doubt that the words about 'binding' and 'loosing,' and about 'absolving' and 'retaining' sins, which in the first and fourth Gospels are ascribed to Christ, are really authentic. That is to say, they are needed to account for the actual

[1] See 1 Cor. ix. 21.

position which from the first the rulers of the New Israel are found to hold and the moral and disciplinary powers they are found to exercise. In respect of the ethical law, then, our Lord came truly not to destroy, but to fulfil.

But was this so with regard to the ceremonial law and the Temple worship? Our Lord is represented by St. Luke as having been brought up at home to keep the ceremonial law and to attend the Passover. He is represented in St. Mark and St. Luke as directing lepers whom He healed to go to the priests in the Temple to have their recovery certified and to offer the proper sacrifices.[1] And He refers to the work of the priests in the Temple, and to its altar, as any pious Jew would do.[2] There is no evidence that He shared the horror of the Essenes in regard to animal sacrifices. The attempt to find such a motive in the cleansing of the Temple quite breaks down. It cannot, moreover, be reasonably doubted that our Lord contemplated in the immediate future the destruction of the Temple, which would mean, of course, the ending of the ceremonial worship centreing in the Temple. But till we come to the account of the Last Supper there is nothing to indicate that He

[1] Mark i. 44; Luke v. 14, xvii. 14.

[2] Matt. v. 23, xxiii. 16–22. These are surely authentic texts.

was preparing for His New Israel anything like a substitute for it. There, however, there is a plain indication. There He interprets His own immediate death as a sacrificial death which is to be the basis of a New Covenant. He looks back quite clearly to the inaugural sacrifice of the old Covenant—that on which all the sacrificial system of the Jews was based; and He puts in its place His own death—the offering of His body and the pouring out of His blood—as the sacrificial inauguration of the New Covenant; and He institutes for His Church a perpetual memorial of Himself as so sacrificed, whereby in some spiritual way they were to eat His sacrificed body and drink His outpoured blood. This is the event which justifies the Epistle to the Hebrews in its conception of Christ as Himself at once the true priest and victim, and the inaugurator of the true worship under the New Covenant. It would appear then that Jesus Christ adopted the same attitude towards the old law of sacrificial worship as He did towards the old law of conduct—He came not to destroy, but to fulfil.

## II

We have still, however, to examine the suggestion that the sacramentalism of the

Church was due to the influence of the surrounding paganism—especially to the Hellenistic 'mysteries.' These 'mysteries' are to be distinguished from the official religions of Rome and of the Greek cities.[1] They had their origin in part in the East and in part in Egypt—though the mysteries of Dionysus and the Orphic mysteries and the mysteries of Eleusis were part of Greek religious life from very ancient days. They appear in the Roman Empire as mostly private religious cults, maintaining secrecy with regard to their rites and their special doctrines, though their general significance was understood. They professed to bring their initiates under the protection of some divine being and, in the case of most of them, to secure for their souls at death a safe passage into the unseen world, protected from the assaults of evil spirits. And because the Greek and Roman world was weary, and was oppressed with the dread of evil spirits and remorseless fate, and with the feeling of the pollution of physical life, they proved widely attractive. The myths on which they were founded were not in most cases at all edifying, and their traditional rites were often barbarous—such as the tearing of a living bull to pieces and devouring its flesh in the

[1] See *The Holy Spirit and the Church*, chap. iii, where the argument of this section is developed.

mysteries of Dionysus, or taking a bath of bull's blood in the mysteries of the Phrygian Mother and of Mithras—and they worked upon the emotions of their votaries by inducing a state of frenzy or by hypnotism. But in the Imperial period their disreputable features were toned down and their crude myths received a more or less philosophical interpretation. In the classical period, indeed, these mysteries receive little attention. They are not worthy of the notice of intelligent persons. But in Plutarch and Apuleius (of the second century) we see their attraction for educated men and for philosophers; and among all classes they had an immense vogue. It is in these mysteries that it is proposed to find the source of Christian sacramentalism.

Now, there can be no doubt that in the later history of the Church—let us say between the third and fifth centuries—the influence of the mysteries is observable: as, for instance, in the *disciplina arcani*—the elaborated method of concealing the Christian 'mysteries' from all but the initiated, and the quasi-magical misuse of the consecrated bread of the altar as a charm or preservative from peril, of which we find traces; also there can be no doubt that quite at the beginning of the Gospel the widespread habit of becoming initiated into voluntary and private associations for

religious worship and fellowship, distinct from the public and official forms of religion, and the prevailing sense of religious need which made such associations acceptable,—all this created an atmosphere favourable to the spread of the Christian religion. The mysteries can thus be reckoned, with the unity of the Empire and the world-wide use of the Greek and Latin languages, as elements in what the ancient Christian writers call the 'divine preparation' for the spread of the Gospel. But that is a different thing from saying that Christianity owed any of its original elements or doctrines to the mysteries. The comparative study of religion has taught us that there is all over the world of man an identity of tendency in religion which cannot be ascribed to conscious or unconscious borrowing; and sacramentalism in its most general sense—the expression of religion in outward rites and symbolic forms—is part of a universal tendency. Sacramentalism, however, in its stricter sense—the belief that special divine gifts are communicated to men through material forms or rites—is by no means so general. In barbarous days when the god was actually identified with some animal or with something that could be eaten, it could be believed that by 'eating their god' men could appropriate his strength; but of this sort of barbaric belief there

proves to be no real trace in the Roman Empire any more than among the Jews. Thus the proposed assimilation of the Eucharist to this kind of barbarism is quite unjustified.

But in a deeply spiritual form and under deeply ethical conditions sacramentalism, thus more strictly defined, *is* evident in St. Paul, and it is a fashion of criticism to-day even to exaggerate this point. St. Paul no doubt did believe that certain social rites of the Church —baptism and the Eucharist—were by divine appointment made to be vehicles of spiritual gifts, of incorporation into Christ and fellowship in His life. I need not now stop to prove this.[1] It was part of his teaching about the Holy Spirit, as mediating Christ to the Church and its individual members. And there is no reasonable ground for attributing the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as you find it in St. Paul and St. John to anything except the teaching of the Jewish Scriptures and the promises of Christ, of which we read the fulfilment in the Acts.

But there is almost nothing in the Jewish Scriptures which suggest the belief in sacraments strictly defined, that is, particular sacred rites mediating spiritual gifts.[2] The belief in

[1] See *The Holy Spirit and the Church*, pp. 124 ff.

[2] See *ibid.*, p. 92, n. 1. Cf. O. W. Bousset, *Relig. des*

the sacramental efficacy of the bread and the cup in the Eucharist appears to have been due to the solemn words of Jesus at the institution, as interpreted by St. Paul, an interpretation no doubt constantly reinforced by the experience of the Church. That the baptism of Christ would have a higher spiritual efficacy than his own baptism was anticipated by John the Baptist, and, if the fourth Gospel is to be trusted, Jesus Himself spoke of being 'born of water and of the Spirit.' Whether He Himself instructed His disciples to administer the laying on of hands, a symbolic rite familiar to the Jews, we can only conjecture. Certainly in the Acts the Church appears as ministering both the washing with water and the laying on of hands as parts of one sacrament of initiation, with an undoubted belief that thereby the convert gained a new spiritual status, received the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is spoken of by St. Paul as received by Christians at a definite moment; and though they are

*Judentums*, p. 230: 'Vor allem kennt die jüdische Kirche im grossen und ganzen keine Sacramente, wenn wir unter Sacrament eine heilige Handlung verstehen, in welcher dem glaubigen durch materielle Mittel eine übernaturliche Gnadengabe zu teil wird.' Bousset finds slight approaches to sacramentalism in Essenism and in 2 Enoch xxii. 8–9. It was in the Church, he holds, before St. Paul, but he assigns to it a pagan origin, none the less.

instructed henceforth to correspond with the gift and use it to the full, it is never suggested that they have need to ask for it.[1] The gifts of 'tongues' and prophecy in the earliest period of the Church's life confirmed their faith in the efficacy of the initial rites. Thus the sacramentalism of St. Paul and of St. Luke in the Acts requires nothing to explain it except, first, the belief inherited from the old prophets and from John the Baptist that a fresh and rich effusion of the Holy Spirit would accompany the coming of the Christ, secondly the promises of Christ Himself, and finally the actual experience of the Church at and after Pentecost. In the *genesis* of Christian sacramentalism no probable place can be found for Hellenism. Our Lord had almost no contact with Hellenism in His life on earth. He does not appear to have visited the new brilliant Greek cities of Galilee or the Decapolis. The earliest Church tradition was formed in the intensely Jewish atmosphere of Jerusalem, and sacramentalism appears there already. Saul of Tarsus no doubt had an outside knowledge about the 'mysteries'; but he viewed them with horror. He is not the least 'liberal' in his attitude towards 'the tables of devils.' And his zeal shows itself nowhere more than when he is guarding the Church, now flooded

[1] See *Holy Spirit and the Church*, pp. 15, 132 n. 2.

with Gentiles, from the peril of the immoral associations of heathen religions.[1]

Further, it is gratuitous to seek to attach to the sacramentalism, which belongs to the Christian religion from its origin, the associations of magic. No doubt magic, in its popular and unscientific sense, as equivalent to any non-moral belief in the efficacy of 'sacred' rites or objects, always dogs sacramentalism and has shown its noxious influence within the Christian Church. But it does not belong to its origin; and the danger of it is no justification for rejecting or disparaging what history shows to be an original feature of its corporate life, which is of our Lord's own provision. All the best institutions and ideas of humanity are liable to even startling abuses, and if we were to reject ideas and institutions because they have been greatly abused, we should find humanity empty of all content. No one can read St. Paul with an open mind without seeing that he believed the Christian rites to be, by the divine power of the Spirit, ordained channels or instruments for the bestowal of spiritual gifts. But it is at least equally

[1] There is a discriminating chapter of Dr. Rashdall's in his *Idea of Atonements*, App. ii, on 'Christianity and the Mystery Religions.' There are a few sentences which we could wish changed. But the substance of the appendix seems to me to express the truth.

evident that he demands for the profitable use of all such divine gifts the response of faith and the will of obedience. There is no more justification for setting the belief in the necessity of sacraments into opposition to the belief in the necessity of faith and conversion than there would be for setting the recognition of the necessity of food for physical nourishment into opposition to the recognition of the necessity of a mouth to receive the food and a digestion to assimilate it. The sacraments supply the spiritual nourishment, objectively and as it were from outside; but faith is the mouth which receives it and the converted heart is the appetite which can assimilate it. And no one can read the literature of early Christianity, or of Christianity all down the ages, without recognizing the constant emphasis laid by the Church on the principle that the reception of its sacraments without the fundamentally requisite dispositions of the soul works ruin and not blessing. Without such dispositions men but 'eat and drink judgement to themselves.'

There does not, then, seem to be any excuse for tracing to the influence of the mysteries the sacramentalism which is fundamental in Christianity or in identifying as 'magic' the belief in outward, corporate rites as instruments of spiritual gifts. On the other hand, it

is difficult to exaggerate how deeply the sacramental principle is involved in the corporate or social idea of religion, or how necessary it is to hold fast to it, if we are to guard religion from the peril of individual emotionalism on the one hand and intellectualism on the other. If a universal Church is to be kept together, it must be in part the obligation of sacraments which is to do it. Sacramentalism guards the religion of the common man from the perils of individualism, whether emotional or intellectual.[1]

[1] See *The Holy Spirit and the Church*, pp. 146 ff., and Addit. Note 16 in this volume, p. 223, on E. F. Scott's *Spirit in the N.T.*

## LECTURE VI

# OF THE INSTITUTIONAL, INTELLECTUAL, AND MYSTICAL ELEMENTS IN RELIGION AND THE NEED OF A SYNTHESIS OF ALL THE THREE

The manifold wisdom of God.—Eph. iii. 10.

Friedrich von Hügel, who was taken from this world last year, whom some of us think of as the wisest, broadest, and deepest of the religious thinkers and teachers of our generation, began his great book on *The Mystical Element of Religion*[1] by analysing religion in general into three elements—the institutional, the intellectual, and the mystical.

Without further reference, then, to the use this venerated author makes of his analysis, but simply adopting it for my own purposes, I propose to describe these three elements as each essential to religion, and to indicate the grave peril of relying on any one of them in isolation; or, conversely, I would help you to

[1] The book is an exceedingly elaborate account of a remarkable saint of the fifteenth century—St. Catherine of Genoa. (First edition, 1908: J. M. Dent, London.)

feel that the sanity of religion lies in something like an equipoise of all three.

## I

1. Institutional religion means religion as it presents itself in the world as a visible social institution, resting on a basis of doctrines about God and man believed to have divine authority, and expressing itself in moral laws, and rites and customs of religion, which claim to govern the practice and command the allegiance of those who belong to it. Speaking generally, it is as social institutions of this kind that the various religions of history do present themselves. And in the natural order the rising generations under each religion—Christian, Jewish, Mohammedan, Brahman, Buddhist, and the rest—are brought up to accept by tradition from their parents and teachers the dogmas and practices which belong to it. The authoritative practices enshrine and embody the doctrines, and it is chiefly through the practices which they are taught and the precepts which they accept that the doctrines or ideas of the religion pass into the minds of the children. So it is with the religion of the Jews; and when Judaism, along one line, passed into Christianity, so it was from the first with the Christian Church. No one who reads the New Testament can

doubt this. The religion of the Acts and of the Epistles is an institutional religion. The Church of the Old Covenant has passed into the Church of the New; and those among the modern critics who have denied that Jesus Christ contemplated the Church or intended to reorganize and refound the old Church on the new basis of faith in Himself have been driven to ignore or deal very roughly both with the evidence and with the probabilities of the situation. Jesus Christ had indeed fully in view the perils and weaknesses of ecclesiastical authority, but He appears to have seen also that it is an essential element in religion.

That the religion of the New Testament as it stands is an institutional religion there are very few who would doubt. It was based on a message or word of God which dominated its tradition. 'Though we,' cries St. Paul, 'or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema. As we have said before, so say I now again, If any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema.' What the doctrinal tradition is which the books of the New Testament presuppose, we can find out easily by analysis. It concerns the being and character of God,

and man's being and destiny. It is a gospel of the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. It is a gospel rooted in historical facts concerning Jesus of Nazareth and the mission of the Spirit. It proclaims a confident hope of the kingdom of God to come. It is authoritative also in its claim of control over the lives of those who belong to it. It requires a certain standard of ethical and social conduct. It has an apostolic ministry which derives its authority from Christ. It claims to excommunicate and to absolve with divine sanctions. It has sacraments or ceremonies of the society which, as divinely covenanted instruments of spiritual grace, bind the individual into the fellowship of the body. Christianity, then, appears in history as an institutional religion, like other religions. It assumes that religion is a social matter which is to pass from parents to children and which is to consecrate the beginnings of human life. So far the Church is just like the State, and religious education just like the rest of education. The idea is not entertained at all that the child is meant to start afresh with a blank mind and find out what he can for himself as he grows. He is born into a continuous society, and its tradition is to pass into him first unconsciously and then consciously.

2. Religion in which the intellectual element

prevails is the religion of one who has come to years of discretion and feels that he must think and judge for himself. If he has not been brought up in real membership of any particular religion, so as to have learned its doctrines and its practices and its duties, he can only contemplate with a bewildered interest the world of his experience and growing knowledge, and do the best he can to find some solution of the moral and intellectual problems which it presents. His religion, if under such circumstances he attains one, will be based on the best answer he can find to the pressing problems of God and duty—of his 'whence' and 'whither.' If, on the other hand, he has been brought up (let us say) as a positive Christian and is not already alienated from his inherited faith, he will still feel himself impelled to face the problems which the free thought of his time presents to his mind. He will not tolerate any obscurantism—that is, the refusal to face disagreeable facts. If he has felt deep in his soul the appeal of revelation, still he will feel that conscience and reason are also from God and he will insist that revealed religion, because it is the truth, must not contradict the verdicts of the inward light. He will demand the liberty to welcome truth from all sources. He will observe that 'tradition' in all departments of life, besides main-

taining a heritage of truth, also accumulates a good deal of rubbish; and he will not be surprised that he has to pass through anxious hours before he sees any prospect of a sound and fair adjustment of the old faith and the new learning. Nevertheless to reach such a harmony will be his aim. If, to take a third possibility, he has been brought up in the religion of tradition, and has been 'offended,' possibly through the fault and blindness of his teachers, and has revolted from the religion of his forefathers, he is likely to be driven by reaction into a prejudiced antagonism to what once he believed, to make the worst of it, and to become the victim of an unbalanced enthusiasm for the newest theory. Thus intellectual religion may take very various colours according to the circumstances or capacities of a thinking man; but if he is a thinking man, and if religion in some shape maintains its hold on him, it must be in some measure an intellectual religion. His religious beliefs and practices must harmonize with what his conscience and secular knowledge and experience lead him to believe to be true.

Let us add that the Christian religion in its original form, and in its best form at all periods, is quite free from obscurantism. Jesus Christ claims of men that they should think for themselves and freely. He emphasizes the

rights of conscience and reason. He would indeed have men confidently believe that God, their Father, has met men's best efforts to find Him, by a responsive disclosure of Himself, and He claims their belief in this word of God; but He would not have us expect of revelation that it should teach men by divine authority what by their own observation and thought they can, however laboriously, learn for themselves; and He leads us to believe that God will approve His word—not by sheer power, but by appealing to and reinforcing our conscience and reason.

3. Giving to mysticism its widest sense, we mean by the mystical element in religion the inward, personal apprehension and realization of God and communion with Him. This is a prominent feature in almost all advanced religions. It is prominent in Hinduism and under Islam. Ramon Lull learned, he tells us, the secret of the 'dialogue of the soul with God' from the Mohammedan Sufis. How strong the mystical spirit became in the religion of the Old Testament the Psalms bear glorious witness. 'Seek ye my face. . . . Thy face, Lord, will I seek.' 'In thy light shall I see light.' 'Thou shalt hide them privily by thine own presence from the provoking of all men; thou shalt keep them secretly in thy tabernacle from the strife of tongues.' Our Lord Himself

held intimate and constant communion with His Father; and teaches us that insistent, importunate personal prayer is essential to religion and can claim the personal response of God. The last discourses in the Upper Chamber, which we cannot but believe to be substantially authentic words of Jesus, are full of the mystical spirit. Again, St. Paul and St. John are representative mystics, and of the New Testament as a whole it must be said that institutionalism is at most not more evident there than the insistence on personal religion—the activity of the converted soul seeking God and finding Him, or rather being found of Him.

It is to be noticed that Christianity, while it appeals to our intelligence with its proofs or evidences, never professes to be demonstrative. It never ceases to require the personal venture of faith which dispenses with or anticipates the full satisfaction of the intellect. It says to the outside world in effect: 'If what you hear from us Christians and see among us moves you to trust our message, that is enough; you must take it in faith and try it in experience; only by the help of the witness from within can it ever be expected that the sense of probability will pass into conviction.' 'No man can say, *Jesus is Lord*, but in Holy Spirit.' In one shape or another, then, the

mystical, which includes the inward moral witness, is an essential constituent of real religion.

## II

But each of these three elements of religion develops disastrously if it be allowed to be separated from the others. This is indeed so obvious that it hardly needs emphasis. Highly organized institutionalism degenerates into a tyranny in the hands of ecclesiastical authorities—such a tyranny as our Lord found opposed to Him in the persons of the Scribes and Pharisees. How He detested it, we know; and we know also that the refusal of these authoritative persons to accept His challenge —the challenge of one whom they tried to despise as a mere layman—that they should start afresh and think again what the religion which they professed and taught really meant —it was this refusal which was the main cause of the rejection and crucifixion of Jesus. Nevertheless, in spite of the tremendous warnings of the Gospel against ecclesiastical obstinacy and tyranny, the same spirit has sadly often reappeared in the history of the Church. Religious authority has exalted the virtue of passive obedience as if it were the main quality of faith. It has paid scant regard to the individual conscience. In face of a new science,

it has become obscurantist. It has been responsible for a lamentable series of ecclesiastical forgeries. It has crushed prophets. It has laid so much insistence on prescribed ecclesiastical observances as to go some way towards turning sacraments into charms. Perhaps it is not necessary that I should dwell at greater length upon the dangers which arise to religion where institutionalism is supreme and legitimate authority in the Church, by a one-sided development, becomes a despotism which will not allow itself to be criticized or questioned from within. Such tyranny has appeared in the Western Catholic Church and in the Orthodox East, and under established Calvinism or Independency. As we all know, it is a prominent and ugly feature on the face of Church history, and where it occurs it is the cause of violent reactions which, if they cannot be put down by persecution, subsist and lead good men and women out of the fellowship of the Church—men and women such as would have welcomed Jesus in the days of His flesh.

But the weakness of unbalanced intellectualism is at least as obvious. There are intellectual men of our day who seem to interpret the duty of free enquiry into the foundation documents of Christianity as if it meant the ignoring of the great historic experience; and who approach these documents,

which always presuppose an experience and a tradition, as if they had just been dug up out of the Syrian sand. Then, rightly claiming to read the sacred books like any other books, they do in fact read them as historians of antiquity do not read any other books; they subject their naive language to an intellectual microscope; they exaggerate every minute difference of idea or phrase; they ignore the broader and deeper identities; they exult in magnifying discrepancies; they tear the books to pieces, quite forgetting how previous dismemberments have been first clamorously applauded and then discarded. Above all, they seem to forget that the religion of Jesus Christ was not meant to be a school of intellectualism, but to appeal to the heart and conscience of the common man. 'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and understanding, and hast revealed them unto babes.' These words of Jesus at least mean that deliberately and solemnly He preferred that His Gospel should commend itself to the devout heart of the simple, rather than to the pride of an intellectual school. This does not mean that traditional religion has no need of the free action of the intellect and the criticism of the trained scholar. But it does mean that the spirit of dominant intellectualism will never

be likely to discover its secret or to retain it. And in fact the story of intellectual criticism as applied to religion, while it is in part a story of noble effort leading to substantial results—that is, wherever the intellectual element is balanced and sane—is also the story of brilliant guesses acclaimed for a while and then abandoned, and of controversies of much less profit than bitterness. Certainly, with all its defects and one-sidednesses, we need the action of the critical temper, and it should be allowed the fullest freedom of speech and writing. But if we are asked to trust it as the pioneer in religious truth, or our chief light upon the road, we shall reply that reason and experience suggest the negative answer. In certain phases of intellect, a group of clever men might get together and constitute a school of spiritual speculation and apprehension, like that of the Neo-Platonists—though such is not the tendency of intellect in our day. But such clever thinkers will never constitute a church or maintain a religion which can appeal to the heart and mind of suffering, struggling, tempted humanity, like the religion of the New Testament; and if that religion is to be approached with real understanding, it must always be approached from within the great experience which it has begotten, or at least in reverent appreciation

of its spirit. 'The books must be read in the same spirit in which they were written.'

Certainly, again, the mystical spirit is deeply needed for the apprehension and maintenance of religion: the great mystics are truly beacon lights on the way of man's pilgrimage; and the testimony of the humble and undistinguished souls who have 'found Jesus' is the testimony He values most; but certainly it also needs the restraints and counterbalancing influences of the corporate Church and the critical intellect. The history of mysticism is in part a pitiful history of misguided individualism, and credulous parading of fancied visions, and exaggerated claims to have scrutinized the unseen and to report secrets which St. Paul wisely recognized to be 'unutterable.' And sometimes mysticism, even in St. Francis, has tended to glorify ignorance, and refers itself to a strange mistranslation in the Latin version of the psalm: 'Because I am ignorant of literature, I shall enter into the powers of the Lord.'[1]

Perhaps, then, I need not pursue further the demonstration that neither of the three elements in religion, if it be allowed to become the sole master, can fail to bring disaster to the household. Certainly for healthy religion what is needed is a synthesis of all three.

[1] Ps. lxxi. 15 f.: 'Quoniam ignoravi literaturam, introibo in potentias Domini.'

## III

No doubt natural dispositions differ, and according to their different inclinations different souls approach religion by different paths, whether of individual piety or of intellectual effort or of loyalty to the Church. Nevertheless, I am going to plead with those whose natural bent is by no means towards the institutional in religion, that they are bound to give it its due weight. After the war we were conscious in England—as far as I can tell, it was not the case in the Latin Catholic countries, nor nearly to the same extent in America—we were conscious of an even violent reaction against the Church, not some particular Church merely, but against the whole idea of a Church as claiming authority for its message and loyalty from its members. This was partly due to the revolt of feeling and conscience against war; and to the angry sense that organized Christianity had refused to play the part which Christ would have had it play in fighting against the war spirit. So our returning soldiers, violently reacting against war, reacted also against the Church as its ally; and they easily found a number of other scandals or defects to justify their rebellion. Now, I cannot apologize for the Church or offer excuse for its terrible failure to bear the moral witness

which it ought to have borne. Nor am I inclined to regret the publicity which, especially in the case of the Anglican Church, is on every opportunity given to the scandals great or small which disfigure our church life. Other Churches do, no doubt, more successfully conceal them. But it is worth notice that in the Middle Age and early Renaissance that was not the habit of the Catholic Church. Nothing —to take only one example—can exceed the freedom with which St. Catherine of Siena in her *Dialogo* depicts in detail, without flinching or stinting, the awful enormities of the Church of the late fourteenth century. But, as has been said, the best things are capable of the worst corruptions. The debt of Christendom to the Catholic Church, in its widest acceptance, in spite of disfiguring abuses and defects, must be regarded by any serious person as incalculably great. And 'the religion of Jesus' apart from the Church would not be the religion of the New Testament, nor indeed the religion of Jesus at all. Moreover, it must not be overlooked that amongst the most remarkable features of the Church in its long history has been its power of recovery or resurrection as from the dead.

So it is that I plead with you, if you want to understand Christianity or to be at one with the purpose of Christ, to recognize it as

a primary duty to seek to understand what Christianity was as it came into the world, before it became inextricably confused with tendencies and institutions which had nothing to do with its origin. It came into the world as a divine revelation embodied in a visible society. I cannot admit that there can be any legitimate doubt about that. It has so subsisted down the ages; and I submit that the person who has the advantage in understanding Christianity and the documents of Christianity, and interpreting their meaning intellectually, is the person who has been deeply trained in its system, who understands from within its scriptures and its sacraments and has some real measure of personal spiritual experience. But where this has not been the case, or where reaction against one's training in childhood has destroyed its influence and broken religious continuity, still I contend that the enquirer's or the sceptic's first duty in approaching Christianity is honestly to study it at its best and purest—especially as it is in the New Testament.

And yet—I speak from a long experience of not unthoughtful doubters and rebels—while it is almost invariably the case that the sceptic or rebel has been disgusted or embittered by some real intellectual or moral scandal in the Church's doctrine or life, it has been quite a

rare experience to find one who has thought it worth while to make any serious attempt to find out what the religion of the Church has been at its best and at its source. In almost all cases they have their minds preoccupied with some revolutionary theory of the moment, or more often with some grotesquely false presentation of Christian doctrine across which they have fallen, and have no tolerable knowledge of what I may call the real thing. But this, I contend, is a gross negligence. There is nothing great in history that can be understood at all without studying it at its best and as a whole. The Christian religion has always claimed to be a revelation of God, gaining finality in Jesus Christ. Throughout the New Testament it is implied, and there is no good reason to doubt it, that Jesus Christ refounded the Church to perpetuate His religion, and that the apostles who had heard His teaching, and had experience of His life and death and resurrection, and of the coming of the Spirit, were the appointed rulers and authoritative interpreters of the faith in Christ. It is a requirement of reason, then, that we should first of all study this faith in its first presentation, as we get it in the New Testament. There we shall find, if we allow ourselves freedom to exercise our own judgement, a remarkable unanimity in the presentation of

fundamental ideas, an indissoluble coherence in the ' articles of the faith,' and a very noticeable balance between the different aspects and elements of religion.

Is not all this worth considering, and considering first of all, if you want to have a sound judgement about ' what *is* Christianity ' ? It is a troublesome process ; but the school into which we claim to be enlisted—the school of truth—is a troublesome school, in which our prejudices are seldom gratified and we seldom find exactly what we wanted or expected to find.

No doubt the old-fashioned appeal to the Scriptures requires some important modifications. We cannot rightly appeal to the Old Testament without the constant recognition that it is of the essence of the Old Testament that it records an imperfect stage in God's education of men, and that our Lord has taught us that the spirit we belong to is in advance of the spirit of the older covenant ; nor can we appeal to the Bible on matters of science or history as our forefathers did, nor accept the methods even of St. Paul in the interpreting of texts. It is not the function of the Bible to teach us science, physical, historical, or critical. But in matters of faith and morals here is the record of what claims to be a gradually given and consummated

revelation, which can never be superseded, even as the Christ in whom it centres can never be superseded. The first business of a genuine enquirer is surely to immerse himself in the New Testament; and I believe he will find in it an unexhausted treasure-house of true religion.

Neither the theological schools of orthodox Christianity nor the modern men have been always faithful to this appeal. Theologians have sometimes been overmuch in love with logical developments to be true to the balance of Scripture, as for instance when some of them have so pressed the abstract idea of divine omniscience and predestination as to override the constant insistence which the writers of the Bible, and most of all our Lord Himself, lay on human freedom and responsibility; or have developed the logic of the atonement till it has grossly insulted the principle of divine and human justice; or, borrowing from Platonism the conception of the impassibility and immovableness of the divine, have quite ignored the constant implication of the authors of the Bible that God has as much what corresponds to the heart of man as to his head or to his will, and that movement in some sense is the very essence of life and must belong to the living God. Once more they have sanctioned a geography

of the unseen world which far transcends in definiteness what the obviously metaphorical language of the Bible justifies, and have introduced a principle of the essentially indestructible nature of the human soul which certainly comes from Platonism and not from any source that can be called the word of God.

And what are we to say of modern authors who bid us prefer 'second thoughts' about God to 'first thoughts'? A plausible phrase! But by second thoughts it appears that they mean principally the thoughts suggested by the gradual evolution of the world and life, God being thought of chiefly or only as the immanent principle of this evolution. Now, historically the idea of the immanent God was in possession of the Hellenistic intellect when Christianity came into the world, and Christianity, in the persons of St. Paul and St. John, took possession of the idea and identified itself with it. But it held this doctrine of divine immanence on the background of the conception inherited from the prophets of Israel and from Jesus—the conception of God as transcendent and self-complete, the absolute creator of all that is. So that to accept what is proposed to us as the better 'second thought' is really not to go forward, but to go back upon a conception of immanence which was once in possession, but which Christianity

superseded by a better and completer 'second thought.' Or, in face of the awful sternness of some of our Lord's indisputable utterances, what are we to say of the proposal of some of our moderns that we should eliminate from our thought of God the element of final and inevitable judgement upon wilful sin which a man has allowed to become his second nature? Or even that we should abandon as vain dreaming the whole conception of an assured future in which God is to come into His own?

My point, then, is that we should all own it as our first duty—whether we are ourselves in doubt or are only interested sympathetically in the doubts of others—to make a serious attempt to acquaint ourselves with what claims to be the word of God, contained in the written books, till our souls have become familiarized with its largeness, with its richness, with its balance, with its soul-satisfying completeness as far as practical needs are concerned; recognizing at the same time how decidedly it refuses to let us suppose that we can gain any such complete knowledge of divine things here on earth as would satisfy intellectual curiosity.

It is sometimes imagined that a permanent creed is impossible in a changing world. And it is obviously true that there is very much in human life that changes—including its science. But underneath this world of change and

development there is a 'general heart of man' which subsists with the same unchanging wants and passions and spiritual capacities; and it is this unchanging manhood which alone the self-disclosure of God in Christ claims to satisfy. It is in this fundamental and unchanging region that we can hope and strive to bring humanity together in the same faith—labouring at home to turn the hearts of the children to their fathers and the hearts of the fathers to their children; labouring also abroad to present the religion of the European Churches in only its essential and catholic elements to the children of the East or of Africa, so that it may develop afresh among each people in forms suitable to their own spirit—lest, through our faithlessness or faint-heartedness, the witness of God in the world should fail or be weakened or narrowed.[1]

[1] I have just been reading Dr. Inge's Hulsean Lectures on *The Platonic Tradition in English Thought*. Catholics always need to be reminded what the 'eternal life,' 'the life that is life indeed,' really means. Institutionalism is barren, or worse than barren, without mysticism. We should therefore be grateful for these lectures. But I notice with satisfaction how many of those whom Dr. Inge reckons as belonging to the mystical or 'Platonic' tradition also appreciated at its full value the 'institutional' church.

# AN ESSAY ON THE RELATIONS OF RELIGION, THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

## I

THE primary purpose of this book has been to pay attention to the criticisms passed upon the preceding volumes and to make such restatements as will go as far as I am able in meeting the criticisms; and criticisms by persons who have a right to a respectful hearing have been directed towards my incidental treatment of the philosophy of my subject. Dr. Inge[1] has been good enough to say that he is 'in entire agreement on the whole' with my 'philosophical position,' but he has complained that I have not treated the philosophical questions at adequate length, especially the question of the freedom of the will, and he would have had me follow the model of the Stonyhurst (Jesuit) manuals. Now I am shortly to say something on this great question of freedom. But of course my

[1] In two reviews of *Belief in God*, published in the *Church Family Newspaper*, December 2 and 9, 1921.

treatment of each subject was restricted by my intention of building at least the framework of the whole fabric of Christian beliefs on what I believe to be a rational basis within the limit of three small volumes. Dr. Inge also complains of the space given to the discussion of miracles in general, and the miracles of the Gospels in particular, in the volume which dealt with *Belief in God*. But I gave it this space and this position because I hold that the rejection of the idea of the possibility or even of the probability of the 'miraculous' strikes at the heart of the specifically Christian conception of God; and that this is at present among the most urgent of problems. Others have complained that I have not recognized sufficiently the destructive criticism which philosophy has directed upon the ideas of 'substance' and 'cause,' thereby antiquating the terminology and ideology of the Creeds and Councils; and the whole of this terminology —'substance,' 'nature,' 'person'—Dr. Mackintosh and, in a measure, Dr. Temple regard as outgrown.[1] Dr. Temple goes so far as to say: 'We have ceased to believe in the thing for which *hypostasis* [the Greek word ultimately chosen to mean person] is the name.' 'There is really so little of common meaning between the terms "hypostasis" and "person," and

[1] See *The Holy Spirit and the Church*, pp. 228 ff.

there is so little in our thinking which corresponds to " hypostasis " at all, that discussions had better be left to specialists in antiquities.'[1] I shall endeavour to show that these criticisms involve a fundamental mistake as to the aim and spirit of the conciliar decisions.

But, first of all, I want to express a doubt with regard to all the language which talks about contemporary 'philosophy' as if it existed as a single fairly consistent body of thought. Individual philosophers, I note, express profound dissatisfaction with contemporary philosophy. 'The defects of all schools of modern philosophy,' writes Dr. Inge, 'are now so apparent that a return to the older tradition is strongly indicated.' This means, I suppose, that we have made no substantial advance upon Platonism and had better, on the whole, go back to it, in its later—Neo-Platonist—form. This is indeed a radical demand. And Mr. Collingwood[2] notes that to-day 'most people regard philosophy as the acme of futility, the abstraction of abstractions.' And not apparently without good reason, for 'the philosophy current to-day is almost without exception riddled with fallacies arising out of the uncritical application to philosophical questions of methods and results

[1] See *Christus Veritas*, pp. 136–7.

[2] See *Speculum Mentis*, pp. 278, 281.

derived from the sciences.' 'The philosophers have lost touch with the people so egregiously that it is hardly worth while insisting on the point. . . . All alike are asking what use they are in the world.' Elsewhere he speaks of 'the reactionary and obscurantist attitude of most modern philosophy.'[1] For my own part, speaking as one whom no one would class among the philosophers, I have yet read a good many recent books on philosophy—by Bradley, Bosanquet, Pringle-Pattison, Haldane, Collingwood, Webb, Inge, A. E. Taylor, Matthews, McTaggart, Alexander, and J. A. Turner—with the result that I feel certain that 'results' or 'conclusions' of philosophy can only be spoken of with great caution. Science on the whole, and in spite of marked differences of opinion at the points where science passes into metaphysics, confronts us on its own field with a vast and solid body of results which we are bound to accept with the greatest respect. But it is very difficult to speak of contemporary philosophy as progressing towards any goal or presenting any solid front. In the longest of his essays,[2] Montaigne builds on the contradictions of philosophy—

[1] pp. 34, 286.

[2] Bk. ii, chap. xii. It starts as an 'apologie de Raymond Sebond,' whom the young Montaigne had translated, but there is singularly little about him in the Essay.

thinking mainly of the ancient Greek philosophy —a contemptuous repudiation of its value which has always been finding its echo through the four centuries which have passed since his day. I am as far as possible from assenting to his bitter and contemptuous indictment of human reason, but Lord Balfour's more politely expressed doubts about the value of philosophy,[1] though again I cannot think they are wholly just, are at least well enough founded to make one take rather light-heartedly criticisms which imply that there is a modern philosophy proceeding from a coherent and authoritative body which has been pronouncing verdicts before which those who desire to claim rationality must bow. Modern science can make some such claim. So can Catholic theology in its long history, if one is attending only to the fundamental issues. But can modern philosophy make a like claim? I do not think so. At any rate, as a believer in the Christian revelation, engaged in building a theological structure in conformity with reason, I am taking my courage in both hands and making bold to explain my attitude towards this august but ambiguous authority.

There are various classifications of philosophers possible. But there are two kinds which from my present point of view it is

[1] See *Theism and Thought*, pp. 44 ff.

important to distinguish. Of the first kind, I will take as an example that startling phenomenon of the 'dark ages,' the great ninth-century Irish philosopher John—Scotus Erigena, as we call him—a Latin who maintained the tradition of the Greeks and a Neo-Platonist who hardly ever reminds us of the ninth century in which he wrote.[1] This wonderful precursor of Hegel is so convinced that 'the real is the rational and the rational is the real,' and is so confident in the trustworthiness of the abstract reason of man, that with brilliant audacity he constructs a framework of thought to interpret the whole system of the universe, which he, no doubt, intends to be orthodox, and in support of which he freely quotes Scriptures and Fathers, but in which in fact the whole historical process of redemption, and in particular the historical Redeemer, seem to vanish in the ideal phantasmagoria of the self-evolution of God and His return upon Himself. The actual—the facts of incarnation and redemption—is to him of so little account that we are assured that God cannot properly be said to love, or to be love, but only to be the cause of love in lower creatures, being Himself far above all desire

[1] Mr. Henry Bett, of Handsworth College, in his *Johannes Scotus Erigena : A Study in Mediaeval Philosophy*, has given us an admirable account of him (Cambridge, 1925).

and emotion. And, from his own point of view, there is nothing absurd in his extreme rationalism. His mind is possessed with a supreme confidence in the powers of the abstract reason. As being substantially Neo-Platonist, his philosophy differs markedly from that of the later Schoolmen—for instance, from St. Thomas, though there is much more 'Platonism' in St. Thomas than traditionally we have been led to suppose. But though St. Thomas is more 'Aristotelian' in his logic, there is still the same confidence in the powers of the abstract reason to determine all sorts of subjects. It was disgust with this abstract reasoning—building its fabric in the air—which led men like Colet and Erasmus so absurdly to disparage the Schoolmen—those master-minds of the early Renaissance. But I believe this distrust of the competence of the abstract reason to decide what must have been or cannot have been, apart from facts, is a solidly grounded distrust which it is the glory of the physical and historical sciences to have wrought into the substance of the best modern mind. And though modern Hegelians may differ very much from ancient philosophers in some of their principles, they seem to retain the same confidence in the abstract reason.

Of the other kind of philosopher I will take Joseph Butler as a type.

He, too, because he is a philosopher, seeks for a rational unity in all things. That is implied in the title of his *Analogy of Religion Natural and Revealed to the Constitution and Course of Nature.* He vindicates the doctrines of religion because of the identity of principle and method which he finds when he compares the doctrines of religion with the conclusions of natural experience. They are both, he finds, of a piece. But he insists on sticking close to facts and to experience. He disbelieves in the power of the abstract reason and in all *a priori* schematisms. He will not have 'the word of God'—that is, God's self-disclosure to man—excluded *a priori.* It vindicates itself, he would show, by being close-knit into the fabric of the natural experience which all admit. It is wanted to complete it. The whole, no doubt, remains 'a scheme imperfectly comprehended.' We have but rays of light amidst circumambient gloom. Only the rays are sufficient to prove that it is the real sun whence they come, and they are sufficient to light our way through this vale of soul-making, where 'probation' and not the full intellectual vision is the purpose of the divine providence.

Now, great though the fascination may be of the *a priori* rationalism, the method of Butler—though it has often been greatly mis-

understood—I believe to be the more solid way to truth.

The most important fact to recognize concerning philosophy is that it is a comparatively late comer into human history, at least in the West. Mankind had already built up a great structure of experience, relying on certain fundamental instincts, and continually verifying his instinctive assumptions in his growing knowledge of the world which is his dwelling-place. This experience had taken three main directions. Mankind had moved out towards nature to appropriate its resources. He had done this with an unhesitating and unquestioning realism. Nature was undoubtedly there and consisted of objects of different kinds with permanent attributes. Mankind had taken for granted the existence of things, and classes of things, and permanent distinctions between things. But man was also conscious, as of objects outside himself, so of a subject—himself—endowed with senses and feelings and thought and will; and he recognized among the objects around him other selves with like capacities, with whom he finds himself or can bring himself to be in a relation of fellowship, especially by means of speech. Instinctively but justly he distinguishes mankind from all other objects, as sharing a common capacity and owning a common responsibility. Also

mankind is found everywhere with some sort of religion—that is, in some sort of real or imagined relation to higher spirits. These are the three directions in which man everywhere is found to be moving out. It is only after his experience of nature and of man and of God or gods has had a very long history, and has consolidated what professes to be a body of knowledge, however crude, in these three directions, that the spirit of speculative enquiry into the nature of the universe, which we call philosophy, awakens to life. Since its beginings in the West with the early Greek philosophers, we can take notice of mankind's attitude towards it in general. So far as it has had a real bearing on his experience, he has welcomed it. So far as it is an attempt to penetrate into mysteries remote from man's practical dealings with nature or with his fellow-men or with the divine being, he has been tolerant of it, unless it has appeared to be denying those realities of which mankind at large has had long experience. When this has happened, he has laughed at the philosophers or ignored them. Thus some of them have seemed to say that material objects are not real; or that human freedom and responsibility are not real; or that there is no God. With regard to the first two denials, mankind has mostly smiled, with some contempt in his

smile. He simply knows better. In face of the last denial, he has mostly regarded it as a dangerous blasphemy—dangerous because mankind has felt with trembling that there is good cause to fear the Higher Powers, if not to love them. Now, I think this instinctive reaction of mankind to speculations which seem to them contradictory to experience is rational. Experience is experience of reality. All along, in every characteristic activity of man, it has been verified as real within the sphere of man's present existence. Let us take it for granted that in recent years Einstein has proved that our common conception of the relation of moving bodies to one another in the vast universe, perhaps our very conception of motion, is radically wrong and requires again radical revision, if it is to correspond to the cosmic reality; but no more than Copernicus or Newton before him has he ventured to deny that within man's world of vision, as a being existing on this planet, his language about the motions of sun and moon and stars has expressed a relative reality. And even though mankind has respectfully accepted the verdicts of astronomy, he has continued to use the old language because it represents reality as experienced within his limited field. Just in the same way the physicists' disclosure that matter is not solid, but mostly emptiness, has no relation

to our actual present experience. The physicist, as Professor Eddington says, must forget his physics if he is to catch his train.[1] Also the physicist must somehow account for the reality of solidity within our experience. In every field science must be able to account for our present world-experience even while it proves to us that the knowledge which it yields is partial and relative. So it is with philosophy. It shows us how rough and inaccurate the common language is in which men describe their experience of the external world. It analyses the process of sensation—of seeing and hearing and touching and tasting—and forces us to recognize the relation of mind to objects, of thought to things; it criticizes our common conceptions of separate objects and shows us their interdependence and unity. Thus it emphasizes, like science, the relativity of ordinary knowledge. It introduces the conception of degrees of reality. But whenever it has seemed to be casting doubts upon the reality of our common knowledge, within its own sphere, when it has seemed to deny the objective reality of natural objects, it has been made a subject of ridicule and has counted for nothing. Within the region of this world man knows for truth what his age-long experience has verified. Again, his

[1] *Science, Religion, and Reality*, pp. 189 f.

definition of personality is very inadequate, but he knows the difference between 'persons' and 'things,' he is sure of personal identity and personal freedom and responsibility; and if philosophers appear to be denying them, he thinks it so much the worse for the philosophers. So far again as a man shares religious convictions and has verified them in his own experience—conscious at the same time that his own experience is only part of a vast body of spiritual verification—he demands of the philosopher that he should explain the experience, correcting if need be the popular expression of it, but not explain it away. This seems to me a fair description of the attitude of common sense towards philosophy; and the claim of common sense to ignore philosophy, if it is found to be in contradiction to what has been constantly verified in experience, I believe to be legitimate.

Sound philosophy, then, is the philosophy of experience. Its task is to show its unity and coherence, and to seek to reach a general and rational conception of the whole world-order. But it must lay its foundations deep and firm in the actual experience. It becomes negligible just in so far as it lays itself open to the charge of ignoring it and dealing in *a priori* and unverifiable conceptions.

Let us seek to apply this general principle,

especially to the subject-matter of religion, and in particular of the Christian religion. And first let us recognize that religion in general, and the Christian religion in particular, neither had its roots in philosophy nor its development through philosophical considerations. That is specially evident if we consider the development of Christianity. It was as a self-disclosure of God, a word of God accepted in faith, that it developed and reached its consummation. I have tried to justify the faith in divine revelation in general, and in the Christian revelation in particular, as being incomparably the fullest and purest example. I will not go over the ground again. It has appeared also that the speculative reason of man can vindicate the existence of God, as a postulate needed to give a rational interpretation of the world; but that the God of the philosophers falls very far short of the God of the Christian revelation —very far short of what the best spiritual experience of mankind has needed, and has found, in the God and Father of Christian belief. Thus one who shares the Christian faith and the Christian experience, or, short of that, one who sympathizes with those who do or is half-persuaded, will not expect to ground his faith upon philosophical reasoning, but will begin at the other end of the problem. He will first of all bend his mind to consider the

Christian faith objectively, as he finds it, for instance, in the New Testament. He will seek to analyse and make explicit the intellectual conceptions and propositions which are implicit in it—the propositions concerning God and man, concerning sin and redemption; he will perceive how these propositions form a connected system, and he will develop a theology or appreciate the meaning and adequacy of one already developed; he will recognize the vast moral difference which the special features of the Christian revelation, as compared with what may be called the religion of the philosophers, ancient and modern, or with the religions of India or Islam, make in their application to character or conduct; and he will be disposed to lay great stress on Christian character at its best, as vindicating the truth of the Christian doctrines by its all-round applicability to life. And all this work is prior to anything that ought to be called philosophy. For not only Christian experience but Christian theology is distinct from and prior to philosophy. It is worth while to lay stress on this point.

## II

Theology is the construction of an explicit system of coherent 'articles of belief' out of the materials of a working religion. In the

history of the Christian religion the main lines of such a construction appear in St. Paul and in the Epistle to the Hebrews and in the prologue to St. John's Gospel. It becomes already evident that Christian theology will use familiar terms to which non-Christian philosophy has given currency—especially the term the 'Logos,' the divine energy or reason operative in the world. But certainly if St. John uses the term he transforms the idea, as he applies it to interpret the person of the incarnate Son. He is not borrowing a philosophy or speaking as a philosopher. He is interpreting a revelation or word of God culminating in a person and an experience—something he had heard and seen with his eyes and gazed upon and handled. I have tried elsewhere to describe the contentious process in which through four or five centuries the Christian Church developed its theology and fashioned its dogmatic terms. At times apologists or theologians appear as philosophers, not always to the advantage of their doctrine, as I shall seek to indicate.[1] But it is not in accordance with the facts to speak of the Church as adopting Platonism and suffering

[1] So the Pseudo-Dionysius and Scotus Erigena are predominantly Neo-Platonist philosophers, accommodating Christianity to their philosophy. And Victorinus Afer is an old philosopher struggling to express his new religious beliefs in the ideas of his old system. See further Additional Note, p. 231.

it to remodel the substance of its beliefs; nor when it selected terms to embody its dogmatic decisions, in the Councils of the fourth and fifth centuries, is it true to say that it was tying itself to the terms of an ancient and now bygone philosophy. The motive of those concerned in fixing the terminology—Athanasius or the Cappadocian Fathers or Cyril or Leo—is always that of finding the best term they could to guard a truth committed to them, which belonged to the Christian religion, which was bound up with the redemption of mankind, and which was now imperilled by an alien speculation.[1] The faith inherited from Israel and republished by Christ involved the truth that the being of God the creator is different in kind from the dependent being of all the creatures of His hand. If then Christ was really what Christians believed Him to be—God their Saviour—that could only be because He belonged to the one divine being; and, to express this idea, they chose the phrase 'of one substance [real being] with the Father.'

Philosophers of course must seek to answer the questions—what is being? What is the real being of anything? What is the relation

[1] I feel sure that anyone who has thought it worth while to pass some years in reading through the theologians of the fourth and fifth centuries, more or less in bulk, will recognize this for true.

of thought to reality? The Christian Fathers for the most part had no such motive. But there must be some words in all developed languages enabling men to recognize that there are grades and kinds of being; and the language of Christian theology must find a word to affirm that the Christ whom it worships as God belongs to His unique being. So when the controversial pressure comes at another point and some expression must be found for the Three—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—within the one divine existence, there being at the time no suitable word in Greek or Latin, two words—*hypostasis* in Greek, *persona* in Latin [1]—were with much hesitation and apology stamped with the new meaning. It is true that our present-day idea of a 'person' was not exactly what either the Greek or the Latin word had hitherto expressed. But, I think, our familiar idea of 'person' as a permanent centre of will, consciousness, and love was, more or less exactly, what the Fathers of the Christian Church meant the Greek and the Latin words henceforth to express, when they stamped them with a new impress and

[1] *Hypostasis* had hitherto meant the underlying reality, *substantia*, of anything. Henceforth that was to be expressed by *ousia*, *hypostasis* receiving a narrower connotation. The Latin word *persona* had hitherto meant a man's public part or character or legal standing rather than his personality.

used them to signify the Three 'persons' in the One God, and later the continuous 'person' of Jesus, pre-incarnate and incarnate, though they knew full well that personality in God is something of which human personality is only a very inadequate image. So, again, when they were constrained to affirm the full and permanent reality of Christ's manhood as well as the full, permanent reality of His Godhead, they chose the word 'nature' to express both this Godhead and this manhood. The universal common sense of mankind requires some word to express the different *kinds* of existences which experience discloses—such as beasts or fishes or men. The Christian religion requires us to recognize the being of the creator God as essentially different from that of all His creatures, though man, the crown of creation, is made in His image. So they spoke of the 'nature' of God as essentially different from the human nature, but affirmed that inasmuch as Christ was God in manhood, in Him the two natures subsisted in the one person.

I have often tried to point out that these dogmatic decisions were primarily negative in purpose, though positive in form. Their object was to exclude certain attempts to explain the creed which were fundamentally subversive of the faith. And I have explained

how disastrous it was when theologians used these dogmas as positive premises for an abstract argument as to what the conditions of the incarnate person Jesus *must have been*, without real regard to the picture of Him given us in the Gospels.[1] But the dogmatic terms have had down the centuries, and still retain, immense *protective* value. We need not say that they could not be altered, if better terms to express the same ideas were forthcoming; or that we need always to insist on the *terms* when it is plain that those who are shy of the terms hold the same truths. Athanasius would rebuke us if we were so to behave. Thus Dr. Wigram[2] has recently contended with reason that the hereditary Monophysites need not, as a condition of communion with the Orthodox, be stiffly required to accept the terms which in their own language are supposed to correspond with 'two natures,' if it is evident that they really mean the same thing.[3] But when in our modern world we find repudiation of the terms in Germany or England, it usually is fairly evident that what

[1] See *Belief in Christ*, pp. 217 ff., and *The Holy Spirit and the Church*, pp. 239 f.

[2] See *The Separation of the Monophysites* (Faith Press, 1923), chap. xiii.

[3] They are ready to confess two 'substances' enduring in the one person, i.e. the Christology of the *Quicunque vult*.

is proposed is not really a mere change of term but a change of idea, and that what it is desired to get rid of is the fundamental idea that the real being of the Creator is fundamentally distinct and different from the created being of man; that Jesus was under all conditions fundamentally and personally the Son of God, very God; and that the perfection of His manhood would not of itself bring Him any nearer to being God. As to the philosophy or metaphysic herein involved I will speak directly. But granted the fundamental faith, I do not believe that any better terms to guard the faith can be found than the traditional terms, quite apart from the consideration of the enormous difficulty of changing them. I believe that the terms 'substance' (meaning the real being of anything) and 'person' (meaning a permanent centre of consciousness, will, and feeling) and 'nature' (meaning the permanent complex of qualities belonging to any one of the various kinds of being) correspond to normal requirements of human language, all the more since Christianity has emphasized personality. If it is said that 'substance' has a materialistic sound to modern ears, that danger can be met—I think easily met—by explanation. But in fact the larger meaning of substance, as nothing narrower than 'real being,' still sur-

vives in common language, as when we say that one idea or proposal is 'substantially' or 'essentially' different from another.

But the fundamental position on which I want to insist is this: that theology is not philosophy, though it leads the way to it. The purpose of theology proper is simply to reduce to order and coherence the various ideas and doctrines which form the background and supply the motive of religion in practice, and to find the best practicable terms to express these ideas or doctrines. The theology is based upon the acceptance of the religion, and seeks to reduce it to a reasoned system, presupposing its authority, presupposing therefore also the apologetic which justifies this assumption. And for the doing of its work theology seeks in the repository of human speech the best instruments it can. It knows that human words, and the thoughts which lie behind human words, are not adequate to divine things. 'We know in part, and we prophesy in part.' 'We see but a reflection in a mirror or in a symbol.' All human knowledge and human language is relative. No doubt the self-disclosure of God and finally the coming of God incarnate into human life has struck down into human experience something eternal, transcendent—rays, at least, of the absolute light. Nevertheless, 'the light shines in the

darkness'—not only the darkness of sin, but the darkness also of our necessarily relative and inadequate thoughts and terminology; and the language of theology bears about with it therefore necessary limitations and imperfections. It never claims to be able to give expression to absolute truth. Only when the day dawns can we 'know as we are known,' and the knowledge of that day will antiquate or 'annul' the knowledge which alone our present limited and relative standpoint admits of. But God, we believe, is purely good. He has not deceived us or mocked us. The light given is the utmost we could receive. It will be transcended but not contradicted; for it is 'the true light'; it is the reality as far as we can know it.

## III

A rational believer in the Christian revelation, however, will not be content without satisfying himself that his faith leaves him free in the whole world of truth, from whatever quarter it comes and by whatever method it has been attained. In confronting science he has experienced within this generation a great relief. 'Those who have given attention to the scope and method of science have become content with acceptance of such limits as preclude their dealing with the

problem of Theism at all.'[1] Thus, as we have seen,[2] though there are scientific men of distinction who would not assent, science, as a whole, can no longer be cited as if it offered any bar to the belief in the freedom of the will or in the possibility of the miraculous, which is really the same belief in a different field, or consequently to the whole Christian doctrine of sin and redemption—the positive grounds of belief in these doctrines lying not in the domain of science but in that of the moral consciousness of mankind. When I dealt with the problem of freedom in an earlier volume,[3] I sought to define the limits within which it could be claimed, and to indicate that the action of the will in choosing and initiating action is something *sui generis* and cannot be brought into correspondence with physical causation, and also that the direct witness of man's moral consciousness makes on its behalf an overwhelming claim. Granted this, and granted also the changed attitude of science, I did not think more need be said. A Christian must believe that the consciousness of freedom is no illusion. It lies at the heart of the Christian creed, as most Christian theologians have felt

[1] Dr. Caldecott on 'Why we believe in God,' *Modern Churchman*, September 1925, p. 293. I cannot but hope that this admirable address, or the substance of it, will be given some permanent form.

[2] See above, pp. 51 ff. [3] See *Belief in God*, pp. 139–144.

and almost all the prophets. Science no longer seeks to bar the way; while, on the other hand, religion can welcome even with enthusiasm the light of science and its dominant category of evolution.

But how do we stand when confronted with philosophy, as distinct from science? Here I would recall what was said at the beginning of this essay on the unsatisfactory position of modern philosophy, which speaks with various and contradictory voices and cannot effectively assume a position of authority. From the Christian point of view its unsatisfactoriness lies in the fact that most philosophers pay quite inadequate attention to the content of the Christian message, to the ground on which it makes its claim on men, and to the vast weight of the corporate and individual experience which has accumulated itself in verification of its Creed. What we need is a Christian philosophy such as Origen attempted or the Schoolmen elaborated or such as Hooker or Butler would suggest, but a philosophy thought out afresh to-day in the light of modern knowledge. Probably Dr. Tennant and Mr. Hanson[1] are right in thinking it impossible

[1] See 'Anglican and Modern Problems,' by R. Hanson, *Church Quarterly*, April 1922, p. 46. 'The great synthesis is not for [this] age to achieve.' We must hope that this article also, and others from the same pen, will be put into permanent form.

that such a structure can be reared in our generation. But we can see the nature of the task. We can examine and tabulate the *postulates* of a Christian philosophy. Some of them appear to be in outline, as follows:

(1) Christianity—unlike most of the philosophies[1]—insists upon and emphasizes the category of personality in man and in God—suggesting, of course, not that God is anthropomorphic, but that man is theomorphic, or, in other words, that man's spiritual and personal nature is a truer image of God than blind force or vegetable or animal life.[2] It recognizes—originally inheriting the recognition from the belief of the Jews in the divine spirit, the activity of God in His whole creation—it recognizes the immanence of God in the whole universe, and in its earliest period it welcomed from this point of view the Hellenistic doctrine of *the Logos*. Thus St. Paul suggests the thought that in the Son is the eternal counterpart of all that is created, and that He

[1] See *Belief in God*, p. 144, n. 1.

[2] It is in belief in personality that the ground of belief in causality is to be found. Man knew that he could *do* things, or cause things to become so and so; and when he saw things being done in nature on a vast scale, he thought of a like causality. Finally, all action at the bottom he ascribed to God as original cause and to His creatures as secondary causes. Causality may or may not be a postulate of science. But it is certainly a postulate of any kind of theistic belief.

is the agent of creation and the immanent principle of its order and coherence. The Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of Him as sustaining or 'bearing along' all things by the utterance of His power; St. John uses the term 'the Logos,' whom he describes as God with God, 'without whom was not anything made that was made,' and as especially the rational light of man, 'the light which lighteth every man'; and the early Latin hymn for the ninth hour speaks the common consent of theologians when it invokes God as 'the persistent energy of things' (*Deus rerum tenax vigor*). But this thought of divine immanence the Christian Church holds upon the background of the prior thought of God as personal and transcendent, and it found no shadow of contradiction between these two aspects of the divine being and activity. Further, it found in the doctrine of the trinity in the unity of God—a belief which had not originated as the result of any metaphysical enquiry at all, but simply as the outcome of the momentous experience of Jesus and of the Spirit whereby the Name of God became the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit—it found later in this doctrine a means of intellectual enlightenment. For God is 'the living God,' and life, as we know, consists in relationship. There must be in God the rela-

tionship of subject and object in willing, thinking, and loving, if God is to be thought of as alive in Himself, independently of all His creatures. So they found in the idea of the trinity of persons in the unity of God—dimly discerned in the process of God's self-disclosure to man—the sole condition on which He can be thought of as 'the living God.'[1] Once more, if there be thus something which we can only call reciprocity of fellowship in the very depth of the Divine Being, we can understand why, in the lower level of man's existence, personality should be found to be essentially a social thing, realizing itself only as a relation of persons.[2]

These postulates depend no doubt on the recognition that a real self-disclosure of God has been given us through prophets and in Jesus Christ, such as can supply us with fuller *data* concerning God than our groping intelligence could have arrived at by itself; but, granted this, philosophy finds itself thereby enriched and enlightened.

(2) For any philosophy which repudiates or ignores the revelation seems bound to regard God as wholly dependent for self-expression

[1] See *Belief in Christ*, chap. viii.

[2] The debt we owe to Canon Wilfrid Richmond for his *Essay on Personality* (which ought to be called back into circulation) has never been adequately recognized.

and self-consciousness on the Cosmos. At the last analysis our idealists seem not to have got beyond the old Stoic conception of the *anima mundi*. God appears to be as dependent on the world as the world is on God. We cannot escape the intolerable weaknesses of Pantheism —either its intellectual or its moral weaknesses.[1] But the God of the Christian revelation is the Creator—sole and self-existent in the fullness of being independently of His creation; and the new direction given to thought and moral life by this belief is very great. But no doubt it raises questions which it cannot solve. What is the relation of the eternal God to the time-process of creation? Must not creativeness at least have been in some sense eternal in God? And, granted that the actual creation does not belong to the essential nature of God as the Son and the Spirit belong to this essential nature; granted also that all that exists on a lower level of being in creation must have had its eternal counterpart in God, so that if creation vanished into nothing 'every existence would exist in Him'; yet, on the other hand, was not love the motive of creation and is not love God's very essence? Can we therefore conceive of God as non-creative, or of the love God has

[1] See the criticism of Dr. Pringle-Pattison in *Belief in God*, pp. 69 ff.

lavished on His creatures as not essential to His own joy? Can we think of creation as of something unnecessary or arbitrary? Now, I do not suppose that Christianity prohibits the discussion of any question. But are there not questions of which it surpasses the capacity of human reason to find any solution? And are not the questions just mentioned of this kind? Is it not an important postulate of Christian philosophy that our capacity for understanding the Eternal is very limited? I think the incapacity of human reason is equally evident in its broodings over the relation of the dependent wills of free spirits to the eternal will and consciousness of God. Man (and the same considerations apply to whatever other created spirits there be)—man, like the whole of creation, is in some sense within God, who sustains him in being moment by moment; but God has made him free with the responsibility of freedom, and (so to speak) stands far enough off him to leave him to act freely; and all the utterances of His prophets have emphasized his freedom, and he has never been bidden to entertain the thought that God knows precisely beforehand all that each person is going to do. But can we then reconcile human freedom with divine omniscience and divine predestination? Mankind have throughout the generations asked this question; and

sometimes this or that great teacher has answered it with a fatal distinctness in a sense really destructive of the justice of God and the responsibility of man—which we know to be realities if anything is real. Here, again, do we not come to a limit of human speculation? 'We know in part.' And is it not a very important postulate of Christian philosophy that, though wonderfully clear light has been shed on our path to enable us to live 'according to God,' yet God has not seen fit in nearly the same degree to give satisfaction to our speculative intellect, and that it is a very feeble instrument for scrutinizing the eternal? If this be so, we shall not be surprised to find many questions insoluble and our logic frequently put to shame. And a great many elaborate arguments and conclusions of Schoolmen and philosophers will either be excluded or given short measure in the philosophical Summa which we are contemplating in the future.

(3) Now we come back to things we know. God has a purpose and a good purpose in His whole creation, and has created man to be His vicegerent in this world in the fulfilment of His purpose; and since by his wilfulness or faithlessness mankind has gone far in defacing the divine image in himself, and (in company with whatever other rebel spirits there be in the universe) in turning this world into a

monstrous parody of the divine intention, God has set to work to redeem what He had created; and one day—in spite of all the seeming weakness of God which is involved in the creation of free spirits and in respecting their freedom through long ages—God is to come into His own in His whole renovated and redeemed creation. This thought of a divine purpose running through the whole universe and the whole of history, with which it is the true life and joy of free beings to co-operate, and their uttermost ruin to refuse to co-operate, is central to the whole Christian religion. And it means much for philosophy. It means that 'sin is lawlessness,' and nothing else—that there is nothing morally evil or the cause of moral evil except the bad will, and that once the will is right with God, all will come right. Any really dualistic philosophy is put out of court—any philosophy which attributes necessity to moral evil, which describes it as a necessary step to good or as a seeming fall which was really the preparation for an advance, or which finds in matter or in the body the cause or condition of evil. It means also that, however often Christian theologians have misunderstood divine omnipotence and ignored the 'divine weakness' involved in the creation and toleration of freedom, there is no doubt to be allowed about the final issue of things.

(4) The culmination of the redemptive action of God, which we can hardly conceive of but as the climax of creation as well as of redemption, is the incarnation of the eternal Son in humanity—in the person and work, the sacrificial death and resurrection and glorification of Jesus Christ. As regards the terminology in which the Church has sought to define this 'mystery' I need not say any more. We found no reason to think that better terms could be found. But there are grave reasons for insisting that the philosopher must keep his eyes on the facts as they are presented in the Gospels, rather than on the definitions, in order to use them as premises for syllogisms. Here in the Jesus of history lie the postulates of all true philosophizing about God and man. Not that we know God only as He is revealed in the Incarnation; but there is the climax of our knowledge. There God reveals His very heart and motive, and it is self-sacrificing love. For Jesus of Nazareth, whom we see submitting Himself to all properly human limitations, learning by experience the meaning of obedience, suffering, agonizing, dying, was throughout the very Son of God, personally God. How remote does any such consideration generally appear to be from the talk of philosophy about God! Yet if it be true, it conditions all philosophy.

And, again, here in Jesus we find the Son of Man, the true man, by whom we are to form our estimate of humanity. Godhead and manhood remain indeed essentially distinct, as the creating nature must necessarily be from the created; yet that fundamental truth remains misleading and one-sided till it is enlarged and balanced by the recognition that human nature is so fully in the image of God that it can in its completeness be made God's very organ of life and action, and has in Christ been so made, and only so can exhibit its fullest meaning and perfection.

(5) There is a whole series of Christian doctrines and facts which embody the principle that the material creation is good and capable of an endless development, and, so far as it has been made the instrument of evil, is capable of redemption and destined for redemption. Such doctrines or facts are the incarnation of God; His resurrection from the dead in a body identical with the old body of 'the days of His flesh,' but changed into a wholly new and 'spiritual body'; the expectation of a similar transformation for all who belong to Him—'the resurrection of the body'; the larger expectation of the redemption of all creation. To these must be added the sacramental system of the Church as witnessing to the principle that material things are made

the necessary vehicles of spiritual gifts. The idea underlying all these Christian doctrines was revolutionary in the world of ancient philosophy; and still to-day, though I suppose it must be admitted that the high association of matter with spirit is much more agreeable to science than any philosophy which ignores or disparages the body or the material world, our modern philosophers seem constantly to be relapsing into the old contempt of matter, as, for example, when they treat the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the body, in Christ or in mankind, as a bygone superstition. But if Christianity be in any full sense true, here is a fundamental postulate for philosophy; and the recognition that the pictures of the 'last things' given in the Bible are only pictures, not exact anticipations, does not in any way weaken the principle, which, I believe, so far from embarrassing philosophy, will deliver it from some of its most characteristic weaknesses.

(6) The Christian conception of creation is rooted in the idea of progressive purpose—purpose which in one sense reaches a climax in Jesus Christ, but in another sense only makes there a fresh beginning. Nothing, it seems to me, can coincide better with the Christian idea of the purpose of creation and the method of redemption than the modern scientific category

of evolution, for which indeed it would seem as if Christianity was always waiting; and Dr. Temple is surely right in finding delight in the conception which science suggests, that creation presents itself to our minds in *levels*—inorganic, vital, conscious, spiritual—each of which only reveals its true purpose when, in the order of development, it is made the organ of the higher—matter the organ of life, life of mind, mind of spirit—until finally man, the highest level or microcosm of creation as we know it, finds his perfection only in becoming the organ of God.

This suggestion of postulates provided by the Christian Creed for philosophy is no doubt very far from exhaustive; but it is perhaps sufficient to explain what I feel to be the weakness of our present position—that we lack a Christian philosophy, that is, a philosophical expression of the Christian creed such as would prove that creed not only to be in harmony with science, but also to be capable, in virtue of its principles, of providing such a philosophy, or synoptic rationale of the universe of things, as should make men feel its intellectual glory.[1]

[1] I desire to guard myself by explaining that the sentence at the bottom of p. 163 ‘But when in our modern world,’ etc. is not applicable to either Dr. Mackintosh or Dr. Temple, whom I refer to on p. 145.

# ADDITIONAL NOTES

NOTE 1.—The divine voice at the baptism of Christ.[1]

Mark i. 11 (Σὺ εἶ ὁ Υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα). Several questions arise concerning this divine voice at the Baptism.

1. First as to the words. In Luke iii. 22 there is a 'Western' variant which reads exactly as in Ps. ii. 7 (LXX), 'Thou art my son, to-day I have begotten thee.' But this variant we shall probably be right in accounting for by *assimilation* to the Psalm, as in Matthew the divine voice at the Transfiguration is *assimilated* to the voice at the Baptism by the addition of the words ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα. This latter assimilation belongs to the original text of St. Matthew, and the assimilation in Luke iii. 22, which we are considering, may conceivably belong to the original text of St. Luke. But St. Mark's version has more claim to be the original—that is, the report given of the voice perhaps by John the Baptist.

2. As to the punctuation. In St. Matthew the voice is not addressed to Christ as in St. Mark, but runs, 'This is my Son,' etc., and admits of being punctuated and translated thus: 'This is my Son; my beloved in whom I have found satisfaction.' (St. Matthew's version of the voice at the Transfiguration is identical.) If this were taken as the original meaning of the words, there would be a double reference suggested—to Ps. ii. 7 and also to Isa. xlii. 1, which St. Matthew (in xii. 18) gives as, 'Behold, my servant whom I chose; my beloved in

[1] Revision of note in *Belief in Christ*, p. 69, para. 2, 'It is worth noticing,' etc., and p. 54, n. 2.

whom my soul has found satisfaction.' The voice would then identify Jesus both with the King of Ps. ii., i.e. the Messiah, and with the Servant of Jehovah in the second Isaiah. This would account for St. Luke's writing in the account of the Transfiguration (ix. 35) '*my chosen*' in place of 'in whom my soul has found satisfaction.' Dr. Armitage Robinson discusses this interpretation of the voices very sympathetically in his *Ephesians*, app. note, pp. 229 ff. But it is incompatible with St. Mark's reading in his record of both voices, which in each case we may take as representing the original story. The words 'In thee I have found satisfaction' would still recall our minds to Isa. xlii. 1.

3. As to the meaning. The familiar reading of Mark i. 11 we may translate and punctuate 'Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I have found satisfaction.' But the word translated 'beloved,' both in classical Greek and in the LXX, bore the definite meaning of 'only' (see the new Oxford *Gr. Eng. Lexicon*), and probably it should be so translated here, 'Thou art my only Son.' See Professor Turner's article in *J.T.S.*, January 1926.

The verb commonly translated 'I am well pleased' is the aorist. I think a fairer translation would be 'In whom I have found satisfaction.' It indicates an already settled attitude of divine approval and not an expression of approval now given for the first time.

NOTE 2.—The notions of the pre-existing *Son of Man* in the Book of Enoch and the 'Urmensch' (the original Ideal Man) of Philo. Their supposed influence in the New Testament.[1]

In *Belief in Christ* (pp. 20–5, and p. 30, Note C) attention is called to what seems to be the greatly exaggerated influence recently attributed to the Book of Enoch upon

[1] An addition to *Belief in Christ*, Note C, p. 30.

the beliefs of the Jews in the days immediately preceding the appearance of John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth. I have pointed out that the Gospels would all of them, without exception, indicate that the dominant idea of the Messiah was the old-fashioned idea of the Son of David. Also I have pointed out that the Gospels would have us believe that Jesus used of Himself the title 'the Son of Man' or 'the Man' when He was deliberately refusing to proclaim Himself as the Messiah even to the disciples; so that that title cannot have carried with it any overtly Messianic meaning. And, seeing that the title seems never to have been used *for* our Lord by the disciples, whether before or after His crucifixion and resurrection (except once by Stephen,[1] with obvious reference to our Lord's own words), it is not at all likely that the evangelists (or the oral tradition which lies behind them) would have exaggerated our Lord's use of the title. It follows that we must admit that it was our Lord's chosen title for Himself, and that when He adopted it it had not in common estimation any recognized Messianic significance.

Since I wrote in this sense, the English translation[2] of the Jewish scholar, Dr. Joseph Klausner's, Hebrew work, *Jesus Christ, His Life, Times, and Teaching*, has appeared. This is a highly important book, especially as bearing upon the Jewish background of our Lord's teaching, and I desire to call attention to his judgement on this subject. He recognizes that 'whole chapters in the Book of Enoch prove beyond doubt that . . . "Son of Man" was a regular title given to the Messiah before the time of Jesus.' I venture to think that this is a far too unqualified statement. But his opinion on our Lord's use of the title is this:

[1] Perhaps John iii. 13 should be added: see p. 184.

[2] By Dr. Danby (Allen & Unwin, 1925).

'He [Jesus] did not, however, use it in its technical sense, but instead of "I." Its significance is often simply "man," without any qualification or specific intention.[1] But even after passing over all the passages where it means "I" or "man," there still remain many instances where Jesus used the word deliberately; and he used it expressly for the reason that while in Aramaic, which Jesus spoke, it had no exceptional meaning in the ears of the ordinary people, it had, for the more enlightened hearers, an added significance, as in Ezekiel or Daniel. By means of this title he partially divulged his messiahship, but more frequently concealed it. On the one hand, he hinted that he was a simple ordinary man (the sense conveyed by the word in every-day Aramaic speech); on the other hand, he hinted that he too was a prophet like Ezekiel, who also had used the word. And still further he hinted that he was "the Son of Man" in the sense in which his contemporaries understood the word in the Book of Daniel, and as it was explained in the Book of Enoch. . . . Thus, by such hints, he prepared the minds of his regular disciples to accept his messianic claims, while as for the simple multitude, they saw nothing peculiar in the expression and went after the Galilean itinerant, because he taught a high ideal of ethics through the medium of attractive parables, or because he performed miracles and healed the sick.'

I should have wished this opinion to be rather differently expressed. I think our Lord in calling Himself 'Son of Man' always used the title 'deliberately' and with some special emphasis. He directed attention to Himself as in some special sense 'the Man.' Probably Ps. viii. and Ezekiel were in His mind in the choice of the term. Also I think the evidence forces us to suppose not only that the common people did not understand the title as

[1] He refers to H. Lietzmann (as denying altogether the Messianic significance).

Messianic, but that His Pharisaic adversaries did not, nor the disciples till after Peter's confession. I think the circle of those who were acquainted with Enoch must have been a small one. And at the last when Jesus used the title 'Son of Man' with plain reference to Daniel, I do not see any necessity for assuming a reference to the Book of Enoch.

In *Belief in Christ*, pp. 76 n. 2, 87 f., 115, 313, I have insisted that there is no sign even after the resurrection of any recognition among the disciples of the *pre-existent Son of Man* (as represented in the Book of Enoch). There is no allusion to such an idea in the Acts, nor in St. Paul, nor in St. John, nor in the Apocalypse, nor elsewhere in the New Testament. The context of 1 Cor. xv. 47 makes it obvious to understand the words 'the second man is from heaven' of the *glorified* Jesus who is '*to come*.' This is the 'spiritual' man who is *later in time* than the 'natural' earth-born Adam, He who became 'life-giving Spirit' by His resurrection, whose 'image' we too at our resurrection shall bear. So it is of the ascended Christ that we must surely understand the fourth Gospel to speak in iii. 12. The words 'the Son of Man who is in heaven' must surely, as Dr. Stanton says, represent the evangelist's comment, in view of the ascension. There is in fact no room in either St. Paul's or St. John's theology or that of the *Hebrews* for the pre-existent Son of Man. The theology of all of these tells us of an only Son of God, the Father's 'image' or 'word,' who at a specific moment in time became man. We must reassert a sane judgement on this subject. I note Bousset's words, *Relig. des Judentums*, pp. 304 f.: 'Mit völligem Recht behauptet Dalman das dieser Gedanke eines präexistenten Messias dem Judentum sehr fern liege, und das man überhaupt mit der Annahme von Präexistenz-Ideen auf diesem Gebiete sehr vorsichtig sein musse.'

There is found in Philo the idea (Platonic in basis and intention) of the first created Ideal Man (Urmensch), who was incorporeal and asexual, which reappears in the teaching of second-century Gnostics and is elaborated in the first treatise of the Hermetic Corpus (' Poimandres '), §§ 12–14, and in John the Scot (Erigena). But of this idea also there is no trace in the New Testament. Bousset thinks St. Paul *repudiated* it when he says, ' That was not first that was spiritual, but that which was natural ' (1 Cor. xv. 46), but I think this explanation is far-fetched. It is not even repudiated; it is apparently quite unknown.

NOTE 3.—The fourth Gospel.

Dr. Inge has chastised me for ' hailing with delight ' the late Dr. Burney's ' fantastic ' theory of the Aramaic original of St. John. I read Dr. Burney's book at the last moment before *Belief in Christ* went to press, and I neither formed nor expressed any opinion on his theory —which does not, so far as I can judge, seem to me probable, and does not appear to have commended itself to scholars. What I said (*Belief in Christ*, p. 107, n. 1) was only that his view of the essentially Jewish or Palestinian origin and character of the fourth Gospel, as contrasted with the view which represents it as essentially Hellenistic, seems to be regaining ground in the critical world, and that we may hope it will shortly be reckoned among the ' assured results ' of critical enquiry.

I wish to call attention to another book on the fourth Gospel, Lord Charnwood's *According to St. John.* The author is a novice in Biblical studies; but he has made for himself a considerable name as a historian. In some respects the judgements of a man who has the training and method of a historian, but who approaches our special field of criticism with fresh eyes, has a value of

its own; and his book seems to me to be full of sound judgements, and to deserve the attention of the critics. One sentence is worth recording. Speaking of 'emancipated and advanced' critics, he says (p. 6): 'Microscopic examination of the Gospels and of other early Christian books is a good thing, upon condition that it does not begin by losing sight of their more obvious features.'

One difficulty in maintaining the authorship of John the son of Zebedee lies in the fact that the author of the fourth Gospel appears to be more or less intimately connected with Jerusalem, for we ask whether the Galilean fisherman could have had this connexion. But is it not probable that Jerusalem, which, as Nehemiah informs us, got dried fish from Tyre, and had its Fish Gate,[1] also depended in part for its supply upon the Lake of Galilee, which was a famous centre of the cured fish trade, and that Zebedee, as a well-to-do fisherman on the lake, may have had business connexions with Jerusalem which may have made his son familiar with the city and its inhabitants?

NOTE 4.—The Gospel of the Kingdom to come.[2]

Dr. Inge, at the last 'Conference of Modern Churchmen,' called for a complete abandonment of that assurance of a 'good time coming,' when God shall come into His own, which surely lies at the heart of 'the Gospel of the Kingdom,' and which has been one of the distinctive features of the religion of the Christian Church. The disappointment of the early Christian expectation of the immediate 'coming' did nothing to daunt it. But Dr. Inge[3] deprecates it altogether. 'Faith,' he says, 'for

[1] Neh. iii. 3, xiii. 16. See also Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 176.

[2] Addition to *Belief in Christ*, chap. vi; see also above, p. 142.

[3] *Modern Churchman*, September 1925, p. 282.

a vast number of people, means a belief that the scheme of things will gradually, or suddenly, be remoulded nearer to our hearts' desire. Thus, in forming our estimate of the world, we levy unlimited drafts on the future. . . . These drafts are not likely to be honoured. A saner idealism would look for its values in the world we know, around us and within; and as those values are real existents, and accessible to all who seek them in the right way, they will bring the faith of the scientist and the faith of the religious mystic very much nearer together.' This is indeed to take a 'long step' away from the New Testament in the direction of Neo-Platonism. It would demand the excision of a good half of the New Testament, of all that concerns the redemption of the creation as part of the ultimate victory of God, of all that concerns the Church as a visible society existing to prepare for the kingdom, of all the belief in resurrection of the body and judgement to come. Dr. Inge often enough shows us that he knows what he is saying. But we are bound to ask ourselves whether the strength of the Christian hope and the ground of its victory, so far as it has won any moral victory, has not lain precisely in that which Dr. Inge would discard. Is it really possible to separate the Christian belief in God the creator from the conviction that God will one day come into His own in the whole of the universe? Have not the hope for the world and the fighting force of Christianity against the injustice and the selfishness of men been bound up with the conviction that 'our labour is not in vain in the Lord'? Is it not this which explains the stress laid on resurrection as against the survival of souls? Would it be reasonable to believe in Christ at all, if in the vital point of the Gospel of the Kingdom He and His first ambassadors were to be recognized as altogether vain-talkers? Let it be recognized that the scenery in which

prophets and Christ Himself have clothed the 'last things' is symbolical and imaginative; nevertheless, to dissolve the sure and certain hope of the ultimate redemption of the world is to dissolve Christ and the Christian's faith in God, and to leave us, in despair of this world, with the mere 'other-worldliness' of the Hellenistic philosophies.

NOTE 5.—The extreme unworldliness or world-renunciation of Christ.[1]

In the last year or two I seem to have become more conscious how large a part of the prevalent refusal of hearty belief in Christ by thoughtful people is due to the idea that His claim for world-renunciation is hopelessly extreme. This falls in with the conception of Christ as a fanatic who proclaimed the immediate end of the world and made no provision for the future—founded no Church and delivered no ethical principles capable of sustaining corporate human life in this world.

I have elsewhere endeavoured to show that we can only form such an estimate of our Lord by discarding a good half of our evidence. I have tried to put His eschatological teaching in its true proportion.[2] But no one can deny that His claim for world-renunciation was extreme. 'So therefore whosoever he be that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.'[3] This, we remember, was, according to the evangelist, part of a series of fearfully deterrent utterances made to the 'great multitudes' who were following Him, probably on His last pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

I think the explanation of these extreme claims for renunciation, as of the similar injunctions of non-resistance to injury or violence, lies in the deliberate determination

[1] Addition to *Belief in Christ*, chap. vi.
[2] *Op. cit.*, chap. v. [3] Luke xiv. 33.

of our Lord to commit His message to the world to those only who were prepared to go all lengths with Him. As He Himself not only refused any compromise with worldliness, but also lived as a mendicant, free from all natural ties, so He demands of His disciples the same extreme detachment. Nothing could secure His message being really delivered to the world except the most stringent method for sifting out from among men the absolutely uncompromising spirits, such as would shrink from no sacrifice, such as would come into the kingdom bare and naked. Our Lord could not entertain, or ceased to entertain, any hope of a general reform in Israel. He saw that what was needed was a fresh start from a rigidly purified nucleus. This accounts for the way in which He concentrated Himself more and more on the disciples, on the Twelve, and did not shrink from deterring the crowds. This is what accounts for the remorselessness with which He pressed down upon the reluctant Twelve the doctrine of the Cross, even though their resistance to it seemed to leave Him quite alone. Through His resurrection—only, as far as we can see, through that—this method succeeded, and gave our Lord what He wanted—the fresh start for the New Israel from an absolutely uncompromising 'remnant,' such as could be the fruitful germ of the Spirit-bearing body. But when the message was widely delivered—as we see it in the Epistles of the New Testament—it had not quite the same emphasis on literal renunciation as we find in the teaching of Jesus—neither in James, nor Peter, nor Paul, nor John. The ethical teaching of the Epistles is indeed true to the type of Christ's, but, as I say, it has not the same emphasis. The principle indeed that one must die to live—die to the old world if one is to live to the new—is indeed always there; and the exhibition of this principle in actual renunciation of wealth or family

life receives some strong encouragements; but on the whole it is not contemplated as normal. All the writers of the Epistles write as to a religious community which is to live the common family life and the life of good citizenship, as well as of good membership of the brotherhood—which is to build the Kingdom of God in this world. This was already quite apparent, even while the expectation of the immediate 'coming' prevailed. The charge of 'extremeness,' 'impossibility,' 'anti-social other-worldliness,' which is made against the ethical teaching of Jesus, could not be made against the ethical teaching of the Epistles. And what we ought to claim is that the mind of Christ for men, the real content of His message, did not fully appear till after the resurrection and the coming of the Spirit. In the fullest sense the Church was needed to interpret Christ to the world. And the place which literal renunciation of the elements of normal social life is to hold in Christianity can be judged only when we see what sort of fruit grew out of the drastic purging method by which Christ provided the pure seed.

The purging process to keep the Church from worldliness is always needed, and needed over and over again. It was at first supplied by persecution, and the social 'boycotting' of Christians. For some centuries it cost men much to profess the Christian name. At once, when Christianity was recognized as the religion of the Empire, and it began to cost nothing to be a Christian, the average moral level went down to where we see it as reflected in the sermons of Augustine and Chrysostom. But while Chrysostom was preaching, hundreds of thousands of Christians were exemplifying the principle of renunciation in the most literal sense by going out of the great cities into the desert, and the same movement was alive in the West, ready to be more profitably organized in the monasticism of Benedict. I believe

it to be true that the normal life of Christians, as married people or good citizens, requires for its maintenance on any really Christian level the concurrent witness of actual renunciation—'the Religious Life'—side by side with it. But unless the Epistles fundamentally misinterpret our Lord—which it is unreasonable to suppose—unless the Church from the start really failed to express His Spirit, the mind of Christ is not to be found only or generally in the extreme demand for renunciation of the normal conditions of social life.

NOTE 6.—The meaning of Phil. ii. 6 (R.V.): 'Thought it not a prize to be on an equality with God.'

In *Belief in Christ*, p. 84, this phrase is interpreted, as by Lightfoot, or more recently by Menzies and Moffatt, so as to mean that the 'mind' of Christ Jesus which Christians are to imitate consists in the voluntary renunciation of what naturally belongs to us for the sake of others. Freely to accept the state of a 'servant,' the Son of God, not yet incarnate, 'did not set store on equality with God.'[1] But Dr. Inge, in his review of my book,[2] criticizes and rejects this rendering. 'I was discussing this passage,' he writes, 'the other day with a Norwegian theologian at Christiania; and he told me that a comparison of the other places in late Greek where a similar phrase occurs, including two examples . . . in the *Erotici Scriptores Græci*, leaves no room for doubt that it was a colloquial phrase meaning "he thought it was not an easy prize to win."' Dr. Inge has failed to find these passages; but, nevertheless, he 'has no doubt' the unnamed theologian from Norway was right. Now, I too have failed to find this suggested (depreciatory) meaning attaching to the word. It is not given in Moulton

[1] I borrowed the phrase from Dr. Moffatt.

[2] *The Church Family Newspaper*, December 8, 1922.

and Milligan's vocabulary, and Prof. Stuart Jones tells me that the readers for the new Oxford Greek-English Lexicon, of which he is editor, have not found it, and that it will not be recognized in the forthcoming *fasciculus*; so we must await the evidence, which Dr. Inge is content to anticipate. But I believe the erotic novels to which Dr. Inge was referred were many centuries later in date than St. Paul, and would be very poor evidence as to St. Paul's meaning,[1] while the general sense of the passage would be undermined by the meaning newly suggested for the term. So interpreted it would, as Dr. Inge says, mean that the Son, before the Incarnation (a celestial but not a divine being), not being 'equal with God,' desired to become so, but perceived that such a prize could be no easy one to win, and that nothing short of incarnation and the cross could win it, and so undertook this uttermost humiliation, and thereby succeeded in His enterprise of winning equality with God 'for the first time.' This, as Dr. Inge recognizes, is not 'orthodoxy'; but 'whatever St. Paul says in other places,' that is his meaning here. It expresses clearly the idea of 'apotheosis.' But what Dr. Inge fails to notice is that it destroys the general sense of the passage. The motive of Christ becomes the motive of self-exaltation. He was not satisfied with the subordinate position in which He found Himself. He desired the highest. He desired it so much that He accepted the only means

[1] Prof. Stuart Jones's words are: 'I am inclined to agree with recent writers that ἁρπαγμός has a *concrete* sense in Phil. ii. 6, and give it so in the [forthcoming] Liddell and Scott article on the word; but I should not find in it a depreciatory sense. ἅρπαγμα [not ἁρπαγμός] is used more than once in Heliodorus' *Ethiopica*, and this must be the fact referred to by Inge's authority.' Heliodorus, the earliest of the Erotici, was born 300 years after St. Paul wrote.

by which it could be realized, and so won the object of His ambition. This would be a curious example of humility and self-sacrifice for the love of others! It seems to me a wild suggestion. What St. Paul says to the Philippians is surely in meaning the same as what he says to the Corinthians: 'That, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich' (2 Cor. viii. 9). The motive of self-advancement is utterly excluded.

For the use of the aorist participle in ἐκένωσεν λαβών to describe the same moment as the principal verb in the same tense, see Acts i. 24, προσευξάμενοι εἶπαν, and Matt. xxvii. 4, ἥμαρτον παραδούς.

NOTE 7.—The idea of the 'self-emptying' (*kenosis*) involved in the Incarnation of the Son of God.

1. I have tried[1] again to state the grounds on which I think it is necessary to believe that some self-limitation of the Divine Son, some actual abandonment of divine prerogatives, was involved in the Incarnation, and I have tried carefully to guard the idea from extravagance and misconception. Dr. Temple accepts the facts as I do. He would be no more satisfied than I can be with the conception of two juxta-posited consciousnesses, human and divine, during the incarnate life; nor would he, on the other hand, allow any doubt that our Lord, as incarnate, was still personally God. But he objects to the idea of *kenosis*. The phrases 'self-emptying' or 'self-annulment' and 'self-beggary' are St. Paul's. Something which can only be so described was involved in incarnation. St. Paul does not in any way carry out the idea in detail. He does not apply it to our Lord's

[1] *Belief in Christ*, pp. 225 f., only summarizing the conclusion reached long ago, and stated in the *Bampton Lectures*, 1891, and *Dissertations*.

consciousness in particular. But it is there especially that we seem to see it, as we observe the Christ depicted in the Gospels. But Dr. Temple will not have it. He cannot conceive our Lord ceasing to fulfil during the period of the Incarnation His cosmic functions. There I quite agree with him. I have always refused to contemplate such an idea. I have always affirmed that the self-emptying prevailed only within the sphere of the incarnate human life and within the period of the humiliation; outside of that we have no knowledge. But within that sphere or period it is required by the facts, as recorded in the Gospels. It is required to make the conception of the manhood and the suffering real. What we there see is really God, but God for love of us living and acting from the human point of view as one self-limited or self-emptied. I believe St. Paul's phrase is the best we can use. I do not think we can do without it. I have read Dr. Weston's criticisms and Dr. Sanday's, and now Dr. Temple's. I understand their criticisms of the phrase. For indeed the fact to be explained transcends our understanding. But it is the best we can use and indeed full of practical value. 'All these difficulties,' says Dr. Temple, 'are avoided if we suppose that God the Son did indeed most truly live the life recorded in the Gospels, but added this to the other work of God.'[1] But this phrase seems to me to take us back directly to the imagination of two simply juxta-posited activities and consciousnesses. In seeking to realize the meaning of the Incarnation we are bound to recognize that *within that sphere* what we behold is not God in the whole of His attributes merely veiling Himself in humanity, but God having abandoned whatever was inconsistent with a really human experience, in order that by such self-emptying His real self, which is love, might be truly

[1] *Christus Veritas*, p. 143.

manifested. In human action the best analogy to such surrender is to be found in the sympathy which puts itself most wholly in another's place and accepts most fully the conditions of misery or poverty which it might have avoided.

I need to guard myself against ascribing to our Lord during 'the days of His flesh' a *merely* human consciousness. As one reads the Gospels there always appears in the background, if one may reverently use such a word, the strictly divine consciousness, which is suggested in the phrase 'no man knoweth the Son save the Father, or the Father save the Son,' and is even more apparent in the whole tone of authority which marked the utterance and action of Jesus. He did not so appear as to admit of His being thought of in merely human terms. But He did appear as subject to human limitations and therefore to all the trials which beset the properly human spirit. We must be content to sacrifice clearness of theory to fidelity to the facts. The important thing is that we should not allow *a priori* theory to evacuate the reality of our Lord's spiritual trials. Any theory will be easily open to criticism. But no theory is tolerable which does not really secure this result.

2. It is again and again suggested that such self-limitation of the Incarnate Son involves liability to positive error; and that we can see that our Lord was in fact mistaken, for instance as to the immediacy of the end, or the activities of evil spirits. In this connexion I am allowed to quote a letter of Dr. Burkitt's, written to me long ago (1910): 'I like your antithesis between *ignorance* and *delusion* so long as you do not consider that being "not deluded" includes *inerrancy*. The deluded man, as I understand the term, is one who *misreads* the signs of the time; e.g. Josephus was deluded, the Zealots were deluded. To come nearer home, those

who anticipated that free competition and industrialism would produce internal peace and ideal conditions of human life were "deluded" in 1851. "One step enough for me," says the hymn; the prophet is the man who steps in the right direction, the deluded man is the man who steps in the wrong direction. I don't suppose that Jeremiah's anticipations of the course of events in his immediate future came right, but all the same he held the key of history in his hand.' This is enlightening, and quite satisfactory as far as the prophets are concerned. Their definite anticipations of the future are often really wrong in detail, though right in principle. But Jesus was 'more than a prophet.' There is something absolute and final and infallible about His whole tone. I see no reason to believe that He ever can be convicted of being mistaken in what He can rightly be said to have taught (see *Belief in Christ*, pp. 189–93). I do not believe He taught the immediacy of the end; I do believe He taught the real existence and activity of spirits good and bad, and I see no reason to believe Him mistaken. He taught only what He knew; and what He knew He knew from the Father, infallibly. At least some instance of positive *mistake in teaching* must be produced more convincing than the *question* which was either asked Him, or which He asked, about the nature of the Messiah on the basis of a psalm attributed to David (see *op. cit.*, p. 192).

NOTE 8.—On the Fall of Man.[1]

It is noticeable that in at least two recent books—Canon Peter Green's *The Problem of Evil*[2] and Mr. C. W. Formby's *The Unveiling of the Fall*[3]—the idea has been revived, which was maintained in the third century by Origen, and in the ninth by John the Scot (Erigena), and

[1] See *Belief in Christ*, chap. ix. [2] Longmans, 1920.
[3] Williams & Norgate, 1923.

early in the nineteenth century by Dr. Julius Müller in his great work on *The Christian Doctrine of Sin*,[1] that the fall of man took place in a 'pre-mundane' or 'pre-organic' period, when man was pure spirit without body. The conceptions of these two recent writers are more or less different from one another and from those of their predecessors, and their arguments are different; and I do not here attempt to expound or compare them, for what I shall say applies equally to their idea in all its forms. I have been criticized for not noticing it, seeing that it is put forward as a means of removing the difficulty so widely felt in assenting to the doctrine of the Fall. I believe that this difficulty has arisen in part from the excessive influence wielded at different periods by Augustine and Calvin; in part from the direct antagonism which (mistakenly, I think) is declared to exist between the doctrine of the Fall and the modern doctrine of evolution; in part again from the sense that we can no longer believe in the story of Genesis as a historical record of what happened to the first parents of our race. I have sought to remove or alleviate these difficulties (1) by relieving the Christian tradition from burdens under which it has suffered from the mistakes of great teachers, which are not by any means part of its real substance; (2) by restating the case as between the doctrine of evolution, as science properly so called can be said to teach it, and the Christian doctrine in its truest form; (3) by frankly accepting the position that Gen. iii. is not a history of two individuals, Adam and Eve, but an 'allegory' of mankind as a whole or of every man. But I have endeavoured to show that if these considerations are entertained, the doctrine of the Fall of Man remains in all its essential strength both as a fact of experience and as an essential element in the Christian doctrine of

[1] Engl. trans. (Clark, 1852).

man. I am thankful to find myself in this attempt in thorough accord with Dr. E. J. Bicknell's excellent little book on *The Christian Idea of Sin and Original Sin*.[1] I believe this method of meeting what many people feel to be a great obstacle to belief to be far better than that of appealing to an idea so purely speculative as that of the pre-existence of man as pure spirit before he appeared on earth, and of a fall occurring in that condition in which all individual men who were to be born in the course of history participated. It is idle (as Dr. Julius Müller acknowledged [2]) to pretend that any support for such a view can be found in the canonical books.[3] It seems to me to suggest more difficulties than it relieves. But (what is more important than any other consideration) it seems to me to be a speculation in the unknowable, which is more likely on the whole to expose us to ridicule than to be a help to faith.

It is true indeed that there are gnostically-minded or theosophically-minded people who will be attracted by this sort of speculation. But their path is widely divergent alike from the Christian tradition and from the scientific spirit, and if they are to be recovered it will be by leading them to feel the value of fact as a foundation for belief, not by encouraging them to rely upon speculations which can be neither proved nor disproved.

NOTE 9.—Redemption by suffering and death in the Old Testament.[4]

I have said (*Belief in Christ*, p. 60) that the idea of Isa. liii. 'made little or no permanent impression on the imagination of Israel.' But one probable trace of such an impression, hitherto overlooked, has been found by Prof. G. A. Cooke in Zech. xi., xii.; see his interesting

[1] Longmans, 1922.

[2] *Op. cit.*, vol. ii, pp. 401 f.

[3] Certainly Mr. Farman does not prove the contrary, *op. cit.*, pp. 136 f.

[4] Addition to p. 61, n. 1.

article 'The Unknown Martyr' (in *Anglic. Theol. Review*, Columbia Univ. Press, N.Y., vol. vi, No. 2, October 19, 1923): 'The spirit of grace and supplication has been won for Israel by the death of the martyr-prophet' (Zech. xii. 10). Dr. Cooke finds here the principle of Isa. liii. that only suffering even unto death can redeem.

Thus when we are seeking to justify our Lord's claim, reiterated by the earliest Christian Church, that His sacrificial death was 'according to the Scriptures,' we not only can appeal to Isa. liii. and the 'passion psalms,' but also to the later Zechariah.

NOTE 10.—The Institution of the Eucharist. The shorter text of St. Luke.

1. In a former volume[1] I expressed a preference for the longer text, as it is found in the A.V., the R.V., and in Dr. Moffatt's new translation. But I desire to retract that preference and to confess—making no claim to be an expert in textual criticism—that I fail to arrive at a judgement one way or the other. Dr. Hort's judgement in favour of the shorter text and Dr. Sanday's[2] is very hard to reject; on the other hand, it is very difficult to suppose that St. Luke should have been content to give an account of the Institution which ends so abruptly, and leaves it to be supposed that our Lord dealt with the cup before the bread, and should have omitted in connexion with the cup any reference to its sacramental meaning.

The shorter text runs as follows (Luke xxii. 14 ff., R.V.): 'And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not eat it

[1] *Belief in Christ*, p. 101 (3).

[2] *Outlines of the Life of Christ*, pp. 157 ff.—a lucid and excellent judgement on the whole question.

[again[1]], until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he received a cup, and when he had given thanks, he said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves : for I say unto you, I will not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave to them, saying, This is my body. But behold, the hand of him,' etc.

On the question of most importance which the shorter text raises, I think a decisive judgement may be expressed. Dr. Percy Gardner and others have supposed that St. Paul's account of the Institution in 1 Cor. xi. 23 ff. was 'received' by him in a vision at Corinth, including the instruction to the Church to 'do this' in commemoration of Christ ; and that St. Paul's authority (supported later by St. Mark and St. Matthew) imposed this imaginary version of the Institution with its strongly sacramental colouring upon the Church tradition, while St. Luke preserves for us the more original account, as it existed in the tradition before St. Paul's vision. But we must agree with Sanday in declining this suggestion as unreasonable. I have already argued, supporting this position from Stanton and Eduard Meyer[2] and others, that the suggestion of a vision as the source of St. Paul's account is utterly improbable. It was, we cannot doubt, part of the tradition which St. Paul received upon his conversion, some six years after our Lord's death and resurrection. It belonged to the earliest Jerusalem tradition. Further, if, with the best reason, we accept the evidence that Mark was the companion of Peter and that Peter's account of how things happened in his experience is reproduced in his Gospel, then the tradition recorded by

[1] I have inserted the word from Moffatt to give what seems to be the meaning of *οὐκέτι* and of *ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν* just below.

[2] *Belief in Christ*, p. 100.

St. Paul is also Peter's. Again, it was accepted in the Palestinian churches, as its occurrence in the first Gospel shows. Whatever, then, the explanation of St. Luke's text may be, it is unreasonable to suppose that he, St. Paul's companion, who must have known what that apostle 'handed on' to the churches of his foundation, and what the practice of those churches was, also what was the practice of the church at Rome, can have intended to contradict that tradition. If the shorter text is the right text, then I do not see any probable conclusion except that St. Luke in the blessing of the cup which he records refers to a ceremony which belonged, according to Jewish practice, to the meal (which St. Luke believed to be 'paschal'), and which probably represented a usual practice of our Lord's at meals of the apostolic fellowship.[1] Luke by his enquiries must have got accurate information as to the immediate antecedent of the institution of the Eucharist; then he proceeds to narrate that institution, which was everywhere familiar, but, to save his space, which was running short, gave only the opening key-words, 'This is my body.' Dr. Sanday calls attention to the fact that the almost overwhelming authority in the MSS. for the longer text, which reproduces the Pauline tradition in the main, shows that the addition of the full account to Luke's text 'must have taken place exceedingly early, and must have been carried out at the headquarters of the Church'; and he doubts whether this very early filling out of the shorter text 'is not even stronger testimony to the current practice of the Church than that of a single writer could be, even though that writer was an evangelist.'

[1] We notice that our Lord is said to have 'received' this cup. It was handed to Him. It was a normal practice. In contradistinction He *took* the bread and the cup which followed There He was innovating.

The clause 'Do this in remembrance of me' is omitted in St. Mark. It was not, we should suppose, part of St. Peter's account of the Institution; but the constant practice of the Church in celebrating 'the breaking of the bread' had all along implied such an instruction, and no one doubted its having been given. So it dropped out of St. Mark's account and out of St. Matthew's without any negative significance.

This is the chief point on which I wish to insist. St. Luke's shorter text (misinterpreted, as I believe) and the account in the *Didaché*, of which I will speak directly, cannot be set up as rivals or superiors to the account in St. Paul, St. Mark, and St. Matthew, which, as St. Paul tell us, was part of the tradition which he received and which accordingly must go back to the Jerusalem Church and to the very first years of the Church's life. If anything is historical, that must be allowed to be so.

2. There remains, however, an unsolved problem. St. Paul twice (1 Cor. x. 16, 21) mentions the eucharistic cup before the bread. (If the explanation which I am inclined to accept of the shorter text of St. Luke is true, St. Luke *implies* the sacramental cup after the bread, as in the common tradition.) St. Paul, however, in the near neighbourhood of these passages (xi. 23) asserts that the order of our Lord's action in the Institution was the opposite. But his double allusion to the cup before the bread must mean something, and the fact that the cup precedes the bread in the *Didaché* must mean something. I do not see any satisfactory solution of this mystery. But I will venture to repeat an opinion expressed in 1888 about the account of the Eucharist in the *Didaché*. After quoting P. Sabatier ('Our document cannot but surprise those who read for the first time its liturgy of the Eucharist. It is much nearer the

Jewish than the Christian rite'; 'It is an ordinary repast just touched by a breath of religious mysticism') and calling attention to the absence of any remembrance of the death of Christ or any allusion to His body and blood, I repeated the suggestion of another, that there are indications in the document that the prayers are really prayers for the *Agape*, and that what we should call 'the holy communion' is meant to follow the warning in x. 6, 'If any one is holy, let him come,' etc. I still believe this to be the most probable interpretation; see at greater length *The Church and the Ministry*, Note I, p. 369. If this be so, the putting the cup before the bread at the Agape (preliminary to the communion) may be a survival of a Jewish custom: and St. Paul's allusions may be due to a Jewish memory. Doubtless in actually celebrating the Eucharist he would have followed the order of the institution, as he 'received it from the Lord.'

3. But may I conclude this note by renewing a protest against the habit of so many modern critics to quote the *Didaché* as if it represented an earlier and more valuable tradition than the books of the New Testament? The ideas and the ethics of the *Didaché* appear to represent a middle point between Judaism and the Christianity of the New Testament. It falls much below the ethics of St. James's or St. Peter's epistles and shows at least no understanding of St. Paul's or St. John's theology. It must belong to some group of churches quite outside the main tradition. It is not only uncanonical, but it is without *auctoritas*. It represents a half-Christian tradition which did not 'count,' except perhaps as a step towards a definite Ebionism—the sort of tradition against which the Epistle to the Hebrews was written as a warning.

NOTE 11.—The meaning of 'Paraclete.'[1]

I have interpreted *Paraclete* as 'helper' in the earlier volumes. But I am allowed to quote the following criticism of this rendering, and positive interpretation of the term, from the Rev. G. H. Whitaker, which I am now inclined to accept, leaving the term 'Paraclete' untranslated.

'Παράκλητος is far more "interpreter" than "helper," I believe. The word always expresses a *relation to a principal* for whom the "agent" or "attorney" acts, as the Prime Minister (in theory) for the King. A has a case at law and calls in B to act as his agent, attorney, "paraclyt." A is the principal; the case is his case. "Attorney" is used by Tyndale in his note on I. John ii. 1. Boyes calls Gardiner "bragging Winchester, the Pope's paraclyt in England." In the Upper Chamber the Lord claims to have been the Father's Paraclete, to have interpreted the Father; and promises another Paraclete who shall interpret *Him*.' And again at greater length:

> 'There are two points on which, without looking through the book to find my marks, I should like to say a word to you at once, namely, the meaning of παράκλητος and of τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας.
>
> 'Of the former you quote, with apparent satisfaction, the rendering "Helper." I cannot but feel that this is a faulty rendering. May we not say that all through St. John xiv.–xvii. our Lord is claiming to be the Agent, Interpreter, Representative, of the Father? Is it not implied all through these chapters that *that* is the office which He has discharged, that *that* is what the Eleven have found Him to be?
>
> 'And is He not telling the Eleven that, so far from being left without One to discharge that office, One is to be sent who shall be Agent, Representative, Inter-

[1] See *Belief in Christ*, p. 236; *The Holy Spirit and the Church*, pp. 11, 113–14, etc.

preter, both of the Father and of Himself? Did not the whole trend of His work for them and of His words concerning it that evening serve to elucidate for them His meaning in speaking of "another Paraclete"? If the word can mean Agent, Interpreter, Representative, does it not show itself to be the very word in which to crystallize the drift of all that the Lord is telling the Eleven?

'What, then, does the word mean?

'It is used of one whom a ruler, for example, calls to his side, to "stand in his council," to gain a full understanding of his will, and then to go to some distant province as his plenipotentiary, able to speak and act in his name.

'It is used of one whom a person about to engage in a suit at law calls to his side that he may put him in possession of his case, in order that he may act as his "attorney," his agent and interpreter in the court.

'It *might* well be used to describe a prime minister, for whom the king "sends," that he may deal with Parliament and nation in the king's name.

'Our Lord had come forth from the Father in absolute possession of the knowledge of His will and purpose for man. He had spoken and acted in the Father's Name, had interpreted Him to the disciples, had accomplished the work which He had given Him to do.

'He had been, and the Eleven knew it, the Father's Paraclete.

'And He tells them that He will send them from the Father another Paraclete, the Father's and His.

'This "other Paraclete" our Lord speaks of (in this connexion only) as "the Spirit of the Truth." Must we not believe that this title was rendered wholly intelligible to the Eleven by the situation and the whole trend of the Lord's words that night? They know that they are losing the loveliest thing that has ever come to human beings. The Lord tells them that its loveliness is that of a *blossom*. The time of *fruit* has not come. But it comes with the advent of "the Spirit of the

Reality." He, their Lord, *is* the Truth, the Reality. But only by "the Life-Breath of the Reality" can He enter their hearts, and dwell there.

'If such is the office of the Spirit, has it not been sorely obscured by such words as "*Consolator*" and "Comforter"? No Christian can get a right sense of living in the Dispensation of the Spirit so long as he imagines that the Spirit's office is to console, or indeed to do anything short of "accomplishing" in power "the presence" of the Father and the Son.

'I suppose that everyone that has thoughtfully written about the Holy Spirit feels that He *does* act as Agent, Interpreter, "Attorney," of the Father and the Son. But, even so, is it not an immense gain to see that this was what the Lord dwelt on when He spoke of the Spirit's advent?

'And is it not a gain to feel that the simplest Christian has to do with our Lord as "the Truth" quite as much as he has to do with Him as "the Way" and "the Life"? "The Spirit of the Reality" brings all that is in Christ to bear on the least intellectual believer. I should not wonder if it were to turn out that "Way" has more reference to the intellect than "Reality."'

NOTE 12.—The supposed incredibility of the Ascension.[1]

I have already endeavoured to combat the now popular argument that the abandonment of what is called the 'three-storeyed' view of the universe means the abandonment of the confession of faith in our Lord's descent into hades and ascension into heaven. I have sought to show what reasonable and intelligent men of old, when the Creeds were being fashioned, such as St. Gregory of Nyssa, and even St. Jerome, understood by these articles of the faith; and also to show that our permanent experience of the world we live in, in spite of changes in

[1] Addition to note in *Belief in Christ*, p. 319; cf. (in this volume) pp. 58 ff.

the scientific conception of it, still requires us to speak in unscientific terms of the sun 'rising' and 'setting,' etc., just as, in spite of the profound change in the physicists' analysis of 'matter,' we still speak and act as if matter were solid. In fact, we are tied to a pre-scientific 'relativity' in our ordinary language about the world because our experience is tied to it. We see the sun rising and setting. The ground and the objects around us are found to be solid in experience. Prof. Eddington has given us a highly humorous expression of how the scientific man would fail to enter a room if he paid any attention to his science.[1] Religion, then, speaks the permanent language of mankind which is based on the relativity of common experience. And inasmuch as we have no mental powers to imagine and no language to describe what lies outside this relative and temporary experience, I have insisted on the truth that, for what lies outside possible present experience, the Church is forced—humanity is forced—to use metaphorical language. From this point of view I have sought to interpret the purpose of the acted parable of the ascension and the language about the descent into hades and the sitting at the right hand of God.

But Dr. Inge continues to mock.[2] He quotes from the XXXIX Articles a painfully literalist phrase about the ascension. That plenty of such phrases can be found in theological literature is quite true; but the point is that the more careful or philosophical of our theologians have from the first used different language. We are not tied to a literalism which is out of place when it is applied to what lies outside human experience. Then Dr. Inge goes on to laugh at the 'geographical' notion of heaven. Here he would have St. Jerome with

[1] See *Science, Religion, and Reality*, pp. 189 f.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 357.

him. But he proceeds to make fun of two orthodox theologians, unnamed, whom I cannot but believe he somewhat misrepresents, but both of whom apparently objected to Dr. Inge's assumption that the ascension was not a real occurrence, *seen* by the apostles. These theologians naturally, I suppose, pointed out that the ascension was an apparition of Christ, like His other appearances after the resurrection, which was real and was given to teach them, in terms of flesh, a spiritual lesson. One of them also apparently objected to the assumption that heaven, for us, was in no sense local. Surely he was right. The essence of heaven, so to speak, is a spiritual condition; but if a resurrection to a spiritual body is a truth both as concerns our Lord and ourselves, who shall dare to say that such spiritual bodies have *no* relation to 'space'? What is space? 'Heaven is to be thought of as a state *rather than* as a place' is, I believe, a true proposition. But 'heaven is *in no sense* a place' is, I believe, a proposition which goes far beyond what we know or have a right to affirm. Does Dr. Inge believe at all in resurrection as distinct from the survival of souls? 'It is obvious,' he says, 'that the bodily resurrection of Christ is intimately connected with His bodily ascension. The new cosmography thus touched the faith of the Creeds very closely.' Does he mean that resurrection and ascension are both gone? That they are 'intimately connected' is quite true. The resurrection of our Lord was bodily; but it was not mere 'resuscitation': it was a transition to a 'spiritual body,' material in a sense, or capable of materialization for His own spiritual purposes; but in its own nature raised above the limitations of 'flesh and blood,' so that the Lord no longer lived here or there, or walked from here to there, but 'manifested' Himself, as occasion required, out of a higher state of being. In that higher

state of being He finally manifested Himself as ascending 'where He was before'; we can only express this action in terms of motion 'upwards': but as to what His relation to space or place was during the 'forty days' or since, we best show our wisdom by silence. If Dr. Inge wants to get rid of the corporal resurrection, he wants to get rid of a key-stone of the Christian religion which believes in a destiny of glory for the body and for creation as a whole; and he wants also to be rid of something so well evidenced in our historical records, and in St. Paul's testimony, that to get rid of it you must, I am sure, cut at the root of historical testimony altogether.

Dr. Inge has a wonderful rhetorical power—and a wonderful power of making positions which he disapproves look ridiculous; but he does not, I think, show an equal power of thinking systematically or of making it plain whither his thought is tending.

NOTE 13.—Notes on the Eucharistic gift and presence.[1]

1. *Dr. Temple's Objection.*—I have urged that St. Paul interpreted our Lord's language at the Last Supper spiritually but realistically, as foreign scholars now mostly recognize, and that this interpretation, as the Church has welcomed it from the beginning, is the true interpretation; and that the principle, of which the Eucharist is the embodiment, is contained in John vi., a discourse which at least represents a real instruction given by our Lord. If this is so, then there is really imparted to us in the Eucharist the glorified humanity of our Lord, as He is in the heavenly sphere—'spirit and life' or 'quickening spirit.' To this Dr. Temple, after acknowledging the 'high authority' which lies behind this view—'no

[1] See *The Holy Spirit and the Church*, pp. 57 ff., 132 ff., and *The Body of Christ*, chaps. i. and ii., and iv, § 4.

other view,' he says, 'has anything like the same weight of authority'—takes decided objection. 'It is open to the fatal objection already made; when Christ in His natural body, said to the disciples as He administered the bread, This is My body, He cannot have meant, This is My risen, ascended, and glorified body, nor certainly can He have meant that the bread was His physical organism, or that the cup contained the blood then circulating in His veins.'[1] This is a very old difficulty (Dr. Stone, *Hist. of the Doctr. of the Holy Euch.*, vol. ii, see Index, 'Institution of Euch., state of our Lord's body when given,' etc., gives references to opinions expressed in the early and later Middle Ages), and I wish to maintain a largely agnostic position with regard to it. I justify it thus—I think the institution of the Eucharist was, in the main, an institution for the Church in view of the future, when Christ should have left them by ascension and should have come again by the Holy Spirit—spirit-wise. I note that the 'carnal' difficulty is met in John vi. 62 by the question, 'What then if ye should behold the Son of man ascending where he was before? . . . The words that I have spoken unto you [*or*, the things that I have here spoken to you of] are spirit and life.' The whole scene of the Institution is 'prophetic.' The body is spoken of as being 'given' or 'broken' for you, and the blood as being 'poured out.' What is being instituted is a commemoration of Him as in the future they will know Him, crucified, risen, and glorified—as they will know Him in the power of the Spirit. It is a habit of the prophets to speak of the future, which they regard themselves as entitled to anticipate, as if it were already present. So I should think it was not at all unlikely that our Lord was presenting to them at the Institution by act and word what they were to do and

[1] *Christus Veritas*, pp. 249 f.

believe in the days to come when their eyes shall have been opened. Certainly the disciples had not then the faith to understand the gift that was being offered to them, if the Church has rightly understood His words. I prefer this interpretation, coupled with a large mixture of agnosticism, to the theory of the risen state being really anticipated at the Institution, just as, contrariwise, the properties of the body of flesh were recalled in some of the appearances after the resurrection. I should wish to decline to answer the question, 'What body exactly was He giving them *then*?' because it was not for 'then,' nor in view of *then*, but for the future and in view of the future that He was acting.

I must add that Dr. Temple is quite right in acknowledging the authority behind the view he rejects. Among those who love the name of Protestant, none held to it—so far as the nature of the Eucharistic gift is concerned—more firmly than the late Dr. Moule (see my *Bampton Lectures*, 1891, n. 59).

2. Dr. Temple's own view—which, of course, has frequently been suggested before—that 'the body' referred to in the words 'This is my body' is the Church, and that 'when St. Paul called the Church the body of Christ he used the words in just the same sense as when he called the Eucharistic bread the body of Christ,' breaks down, as I think, before the constant coupling of the body—or the flesh—with the blood.[1] This surely means that both terms alike refer to the person of the Christ—to His humanity as He was among His disciples, now about to suffer on the cross, but in view of what He was thereafter to become when they should have seen 'the Son of man ascend up where he was before.' In view of our Lord's language it seems to be a fundamentally right instinct which has led the Church constantly to

[1] See *The Body of Christ*, pp. 244 f.

refuse any interpretation of St. Paul's language, or of our Lord's, which has sought to reduce the presence in effect to a presence of the Spirit merely 'embodied' in the bread or 'embodied' in the Church. The Spirit, we cannot but believe, is the divine instrument of the presence and the gift, but the thing made present and conveyed is Christ in His manhood.

3. As to the rationality of this belief, it seems to me to cohere with, and follow from, the belief in our Lord as the second Adam, the Head of the redeemed race, purifying and enriching our corrupted manhood by the infusion of His own. I accept this infusion as spiritual, not material; but more and more, as science merges matter into force, must we acknowledge how little we understand that distinction at its root. It is somehow a real infusion. I confess that I *understand* it no better than I understand how animal life or rational life is communicated from parent to child. We know that it is so by its effects, and we know the physical conditions of the communication more or less precisely. Both those kinds of knowledge we have with regard to the communication to us of the life of the second Adam. That there is such a communication, at the last resort, seems to me to rest simply on the authority of Christ, as His words were from the first interpreted in the Church and have been verified in Christian experience. I confess that I love the simple confession of faith attributed to Queen Elizabeth: 'His was the word, He spake it; He took the bread and brake it; and what His words do make it, I for the same do take it'—only my confidence in the interpretation of the words depends on the continuous interpretation and experience of the Christian society.

4. The phrase '*The Eucharist is the extension of the Incarnation.*' The doctrine of the Eucharist which we

must attribute to St. Paul and which represents the strongest tradition in the Catholic Church, justifies this phrase. Especially by means of the Eucharist Christ is *in* us—in His Church—in respect of that manhood which He took and glorified; we 'eat His flesh and drink His blood' spiritually and in a manner 'which passes all understanding,' but really. Where the phrase is first used, I cannot at present discover. It was, I think, popularized among the Tractarians by Wilberforce, who speaks of it as patristic, referring to Jeremy Taylor, *Worthy Communicant*, chap. i, § 2: 'The fathers, by an elegant expression, called the blessed sacrament "the extension of the incarnation."' Thomassin, however, who uses the phrase, 'per eucharistiam *extendi* et ampliari quodammodo incarnationem Verbi' (*Theol. Dogm.*, 'De Inc. Verb. Dei,' lib. x, chap. xxi, and elsewhere), in his massive collection of illustrative quotations from the Fathers, gives no example of the precise phrase. Recently among us the phrase has been frequently quoted in defence of the use of the reserved sacrament as a permanent external presence of Christ *amongst* us to be 'visited' and adored, as if it meant that Christ is still externally with us as 'in the days of His flesh' on earth. It is therefore worth while pointing out that in all the long list of quotations produced by Thomassin to illustrate the phrase there is not one which means anything else, or anything more, than that the glorified Christ does in Holy Communion communicate to the recipients His own life and incorporate us into Himself. There is not a suggestion that the presence *among* men of the Incarnate, as He was before His passion, or as He 'manifested' Himself during the Forty Days, is perpetuated through the sacramental elements. It is recognized that the post-mediaeval and extra-liturgical cultus, which it is sought to introduce amongst us, was unknown in the

Church universal for a thousand years or more, and is still unknown among the Orthodox. I do not wish to see it stringently prohibited under a compulsory discipline. But I think it ought to be discouraged as tending towards a false theology. The permanent presence of Christ on earth of which the New Testament speaks is His presence in His body the Church. It is to that only that the Eucharistic gift is directed. There is no other shrine of divine presence among us suggested than the Church. In Canon Cordonnier's recent book, *Le Culte du Saint-Sacrement*, the lateness of the modern Roman cultus is frankly acknowledged, though he indicates no distaste for recent developments connected with the tabernacle and the monstrance. But in a review of his book in the *Revue Bénédictine* (January 1925, p. 159, signed D. O. R.) I notice the following remark : ' Une conclusion se dégage de cet ouvrage, sans y être pourtant exprimée. Les chrétiens des premiers siècles n'auraient point eu à envier, semble-t-il, le développement de notre culte envers la Sainte-Hostie ; orientée toute entière vers la manducation de la victime sacrée au cours des synaxes, leur piété eucharistique était empreinte d'un réalisme plus pur, concentrée davantage autour de la véritable fin de l'auguste mystère, et par là, moins exposée que de nos jours aux écarts indiscrets d'une dévotion mal guidée.'

I have elsewhere (*Reservation*, Robert Scott, 1917, pp. 34 ff.) pointed out how the development of the cultus in the Roman Church has tended to obscure, or even lead to an absolute denial of, the doctrine of the permanent presence of Christ in our hearts through Holy Communion. This, I think, ought to be a warning to us.

There is a certain kind of ' logic ' by which the practice is supported. But from first to last ' logic ' has shown itself singularly fallible or inadequate in connexion with the Eucharist. We had better retain the veil of mystery

under which the undivided Church left the matter. And, if we recognize the weakness of our logic in this field, then we shall feel increasingly that we had better attend constantly to the only purposes for which our Lord appears to have instituted the Eucharist, viz. for commemoration of Himself and His sacrificial death and for the communion in His body and blood.

5. *The Supposed Derivation from the Mystery-Religions.*—I have also argued at length,[1] with the assistance of Mr. Edwyn Bevan, against the suggestion that the realistic interpretation of the Eucharist, which those against whom I am arguing mostly acknowledge to be found in St. Paul and implied in St. John, was an idea derived by assimilation from the pagan mysteries. There is no substantial evidence produced that there was, in connexion with the mystery-cults, at the period when Christianity came into the world, any idea of a divine substance or power communicated through eating and drinking. When the worshippers of Dionysus tore and ate the bull's flesh, we have evidence that they believed themselves to be *commemorating* the fate of Dionysus at the hands of the Moenads—nothing more.

I have got little fresh to say on this subject. But those who, like M. Loisy and followers of Sir James Frazer, insist upon deriving the Church's eucharistic belief from the mysteries, regard that as only one detail of a larger process by which the faith of the original disciples in Jesus as Messiah was transformed into the likeness of the belief, which is supposed to have inspired those initiated into the mysteries, in a Saviour-God who had come down from heaven to save mankind or themselves.[2] Against this I have urged that none of the mystery-gods was represented as having come down from heaven, to

[1] *The Holy Spirit and the Church*, chap. iii.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 81.

die for men or to communicate to them his own being; and I am recurring to this point only because I wish to cite in confirmation the late Mr. Walter Scott's opinion in his edition of the *Hermetica*, vol. ii, p. 9. There is no one who has made a more thorough study of Hellenistic ideas. 'The moral distinction characteristic of Christian doctrine, as compared with that of other religions of the time, was the conception of a "Saviour," i.e. a divine person who has descended from a higher world to rescue human souls from their fallen condition; and of this conception, which is prominent in the systems of the Christian gnostics as well as in that of the Catholic Christians, not the slightest trace appears in *Corp.* i,' that is, the document on which he is commenting. And he adds in a note: 'Analogies to the Christian notion of a "Saviour" may, no doubt, be discovered here and there in other religions of the Roman Empire. For instance, such an analogy may be seen in the *Kore Kosmu*, where we are told that Isis and Osiris came down from heaven to earth to civilize mankind. But in the main the distinction holds good. The gods of the pagan mystery-cults might be called "saviours," but were not held to have "come down" in the same sense as the Christian Saviour.' The κόρη κόσμου (the Pupil of the Eye of the World) is a strange and rather attractive imaginative myth of the creation of the world, and relates how souls for their punishment were imprisoned in bodies, and how, in response to the complaints of the four elements, the supreme God sent down Osiris and Isis for a little time to teach men the arts of peace, and rites of worship and sacrifice, and the use of the binding oath, and the proper way to bury the dead, and how they gave men laws, and instituted priests to teach philosophy and practise medicine, and how, when this had been done, they asked leave to return to their home

above, and how they were not permitted to return till they had invoked the Sole Ruler with a hymn, so that they might be 'well received when they mounted up.' This story, which is preserved by Stoboeus, is in Scott's *Hermetica*, vol. i, pp. 457–95. We have not yet Scott's notes upon it, so we cannot say what date he assigns to it. Presumably it will not be an early date. And the rôle assigned to the two gods is not at all such as to afford any resemblance to the Christian idea of Christ our Saviour from heaven. Yet none nearer is to be found. As I have suggested,[1] there is more to be said for Prometheus, who however received no worship in antiquity as a 'saviour.'

NOTE 14.—The Hermetic Books and their use of the term 'Spirit.'

I had occasion in *Belief in Christ*[2] to refer to, and show grounds for disputing, Reitzenstein's use of the 'Hermetic' books; and in *The Holy Spirit and the Church*[3] to make a remark on the frequent use in them of the term 'spirit' and on the sense in which it was used. But since these books were published the study of 'Hermetics' has been set on a new footing by the publication of the first two volumes of the late Walter Scott's edition of the writings emanating from Egypt about God and man and the spiritual life, ascribed in antiquity to the semi-divine Thoth or 'Hermes Trismegistus.' (There are other astrological, magical, or pseudo-scientific writings ascribed to him which are not included in Scott's edition.) The first volume gives us the Greek and Latin texts, including the Hermetic matter which is to be found in Stoboeus (*c.* A.D. 500). The second volume gives us the commentary upon the first eighteen documents. Scott's dealings with the text have been much

[1] *The Holy Spirit and the Church*, p. 85.
[2] pp. 133 ff. [3] p. 107.

criticized. No doubt he is somewhat violent and arbitrary; but I think the reader will be led to the conclusion that Scott has given us a text which is passably intelligible and which probably represents, as well as possible, what the various authors intended to say. The translation, which faces the text, is excellent, and the commentary, as far as it at present extends, full and satisfying. There are two more volumes to be expected.

The Hermetic books are not by one author, nor do they express one view. They represent the lessons which Hellenistic teachers who professed to be philosophical and religious guides would have given their submissive pupils concerning the nature of God, and gods, and the creation, and man, and the spiritual life. Scott sees no evidence for the existence of the early Hermetic community suggested by Reitzenstein (see *Belief in Christ*, p. 134), nor is he disposed to accept Reitzenstein's suggestion of an earlier date than the third, or possibly in some cases the second, century. 'Some of them,' says Scott (vol. i, p. 10), 'may have been written before the end of the second century, but probably none as early as the first century'; and, again (p. 92): 'We find then that the external evidence agrees with and confirms the conclusion to which the internal evidence points, namely that most of the extant Hermetica were written in the course of the third century after Christ, and that few of them, if any, can have been written long before A.D. 200.' The sort of philosophical syncretism, indeed, which they embody existed from the first century B.C. downwards, and Philo, born at the end of the century, already exhibits the same syncretism of Platonic and Stoic thought with the Jewish tradition which some—only a few—of the Hermetic writers exhibit. Nevertheless, it is the later date which suits the evidence of the books better. There are a few signs of Christian inter-

polation, but substantially they are not the least Christian, nor fundamentally Jewish, but represent a Hellenistic philosophical blend, which is treated as a divine revelation and made the vehicle for instruction in the spiritual life. They are very interesting examples of Hellenistic philosophy turned religious, and assuming a sacerdotal authority, as communicating divine mysteries. This special feature is probably due to their Egyptian origin. Their marked divergence from Christianity is shown partly in their indulgence in purely mythological conceptions of creation; partly by their tendency to regard the 'fall' of man as either consisting in the lapse of souls into bodies or as punished by such imprisonment, and by their doctrine of matter as evil and as the source of moral contamination; partly to the fact that 'there is no trace of a Saviour in the Christian sense, that is, of a divine or supra-cosmic person who has come down to redeem man' (p. 13); partly to the absence of any idea of sacramental rites (p. 8); partly by the absence of philanthropy or love of one's neighbours (vol. ii, p. 305). The idea of regeneration in the late document xiii is markedly different from the Christian. Possibly in document ix the Christians are alluded to as virulent enemies and persecutors. There are indeed beautiful passages in these *Hermetica* and there are constant evidences of religious fervour and thirst for union with God; but they cannot be either used to account for Christianity or regarded as having borrowed from it, except that there are one or two phrases which look like Christian interpolations.

So in particular the meaning of 'spirit,' which is constantly mentioned, is not that of the Old Testament, or of the New. Sometimes it is the ether diffused throughout creation; more often it is the tenuously material principle of physical life, coupled with fire and

air and light, as in i. 9 : 'The spirit in the body penetrating the veins and arteries and blood moves the living being' (cf. iii. 1, iv. 1). On the meaning of 'spirit' in these documents, see Scott, vol. ii, pp. 50, 121, 127, 137, 223, 258. There is reason to suspect a Christian interpolation in i. 32 (see vol. ii, p. 72) and in ii. 8, where 'spirit' appears to be classed among the 'incorporeal things' (see p. 99). Certainly the idea of spirit in these documents, apart from these incongruous expressions, is quite remote from the Christian idea. In the late document xviii. 2, it is used for the 'inspiration' of the musician—that, again, is rather suggestive of pagan sentiment.

NOTE 15.—The genuineness of the Pastoral Epistles.[1]

The question of the genuineness of the Pastoral Epistles is difficult and perplexing.

1. I think, with Harnack,[2] that St. Paul's deliverance from his first captivity must be accepted as a fact. Dr. Parry's discussion of the question (*Pastoral Epistles*, pp. xv ff.) seems to me convincing, and Lightfoot's note on Clement's Epistle, chap. v, also carries conviction that when he declares St. Paul went 'to the limit of the West,' he must have meant that he fulfilled his intention of going to Spain. (It is true that tradition preserved no hint of his activity there; but we have no tradition at all about the planting of Christianity in Spain: see Harnack's *Expansion* (Engl. trans.), vol. ii, pp. 437, 444.) There is room therefore in St. Paul's life for the activities referred to in the Pastorals.

2. The ecclesiastical situation disclosed in the Pastorals harmonizes with that described by Clement as arising *before the death of the apostles*—and by the apostles he means especially St. Peter and St. Paul. He is writing

[1] See *Belief in God*, pp. 213–14.

[2] *Date of Acts and Syn. Gospels*, p. 103.

to the Corinthians about the authority of the presbyters or 'bishops.' He describes their origin: how Christ was sent forth from God and the apostles from Christ—how they preached in country and towns and 'appointed their first fruits, then they had tested them in the Spirit, for bishops and deacons' of the future converts. Later he describes how 'the apostles knew through our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be strife about the title of the bishop. Therefore for this reason, having received perfect foreknowledge, they appointed the aforesaid, and afterwards they gave an additional injunction that, if they (the aforesaid presbyter-bishops and deacons) should fall asleep, other approved men should succeed to their ministry.' What this additional injunction was is implied in the following sentence: 'Those then appointed by them [the apostles] or afterwards by other distinguished men, with the consent of the whole Church,' etc.[1] Here it appears that the additional provision made by the apostles was that there should be, after they were gone, 'distinguished men' with an authority like theirs to appoint presbyter-bishops and deacons. This provision for the future was made, Clement asserts, while the apostles were alive, but doubtless in view of their death. And I think this assertion exactly corresponds with the situation of the Pastoral Epistles. Timothy and Titus were such distinguished men, clothed with an authority like that of the apostles, and especially to appoint presbyters.

3. The personal relations of St. Paul to Timothy and Titus and other persons, but especially to Timothy, disclosed in the Epistles, and the accurate delineations of character involved, constitute an evidence of genuineness. The Second Epistle to Timothy is from this point of view especially marked as genuine, but there are similar

[1] Clement, chaps. 42 and 44.

marks in the other Epistles, and they are all unmistakably bound together by unity of style and subject.

4. The special features of these Epistles are such as belong to their purpose or circumstances. The moment was just such as would have brought to the fore the conservative and disciplinary side of St. Paul's mind. No one can read the First Epistle to the Corinthians without seeing that this side of his character was always there; and it is often in evidence.

5. Parry's discussion of the false teaching, upon which the Pastorals animadvert, should satisfy us that it is Jewish and can well have been current within St. Paul's lifetime.

The above are the reasons which justify us in continuing to ascribe these Epistles to St. Paul himself.

6. On the other side is the evidence of style and vocabulary on the whole. Mr. P. N. Harrison, in *The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles* (Oxford, 1921), has most effectively marshalled the arguments against the Pauline authorship on these grounds. It is very difficult to dispute his conclusion. I can only with Dr. Jones (*New Testament in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 280 ff.) take refuge in the supposition that St. Paul, in a great part of these Epistles, may have been content to give general instruction to his amanuensis and left to him the actual words to be used. There is no reason why he should not have approved of all that was written under his instructions, before it was sent. The fact that there are some words used which we know to have been used in the second century, but we do not know to have been used in the first, is not surely adequate evidence that they were not in earlier use.

7. I cannot but think that the moral weight of the Epistles would be greatly reduced if St. Paul was not the real author of them in substance. Those who doubt or

deny this admit, like Harrison, that they embody genuine fragments—' notes ' of St. Paul's which a later author of the end of the first or the beginning of the second century worked up into epistles suited to the needs of his time, such as he thought St. Paul would have written. Now, we know in what reverence Clement and Ignatius held the apostles, and how they shrank from claiming authority like theirs. They would have been anxious to preserve anything which the apostles had written. But surely they, and the Church in general, would have viewed with the utmost disapproval the ascription to the apostle of what he had not written or authorized. They would have surely called it fraudulent, as the action of the second-century Asiatic presbyter was called who forged the story of Thecla and ascribed it to St. Paul—' for love of Paul,' as he said—who, however, was deposed from his office for his crime. (It would have seemed even worse to mingle genuine fragments with spurious matter.) And I do not think we can judge differently. If ' the Second Epistle of Peter ' is (as I suppose) not by St. Peter and yet claims his authority, it must inevitably cease to carry moral weight ; and of course the Pastoral Epistles would not, any more than 2 Peter, have been admitted into the canon except as believed to be genuine. Surely St. Paul himself would have viewed with indignation any issue of an epistle ' as from ' him, which was not really his (see 2 Thess. ii. 2 and iii. 17 ; 1 Cor. xvi. 21 ; Gal. vi. 11).

NOTE 16.—Dr. Ernest F. Scott's *Spirit in the New Testament.*[1]

I had not the opportunity of reading this book before *The Holy Spirit and the Church* was written. But one kindly critic referred me to it among others as calculated

[1] Hodder & Stoughton, 1923.

to enlighten me, and I read it accordingly. It is not my business to review other men's books; but I find something so typical of current tendencies in this book that I propose to make some remarks upon it.

A great deal of Dr. Scott's book is admirable, and I am thankful to find that he rejects some favourite modernist theses very decisively—for instance, the attribution of the New Testament doctrine of the Spirit to Stoic influences. 'In Stoicism,' he writes, 'the idea of Spirit had a prominent place, but this Stoical doctrine must be carefully distinguished from the Hebrew one, with which it had little more in common than the name" (p. 52). 'It will thus be seen that the Stoic doctrine was radically different from the Hebrew one, and still more from that which meets us in the New Testament' (p. 53). 'The Spirit as Paul knows it has nothing to do with the πνεῦμα of the Stoics' (p. 130). Again, he refuses to see in the 'speaking with tongues' anything 'mainly due to the foreign influences.' 'It can be derived at least equally well from the Old Testament' (pp. 81 f.). Surely, however, he is mistaken in his account of the Pentecostal narrative in saying (p. 95) that 'the disciples, in the strength of their new gift, went forth to the multitude and addressed each race in its own language.' This is precisely *not* suggested: see *The Holy Spirit and the Church*, p. 148. What seems to be described in Acts ii. is a simultaneous utterance of praise to God by a band of men so excited that they were by some mistaken for drunkards, but which was somehow interpreted by the more pious part of the spectators as if each heard in it his own language. As Dr. Scott truly remarks, when Peter began to preach, there is no suggestion of his speaking with tongues. Again Dr. Scott denies, quite rightly, I think, that St. Paul 'anywhere identifies the Spirit and Christ. His aim, on the contrary, is to keep

them distinct.' For these, then, and other features we can heartily thank the writer.

But he is still so unduly, as I think, dominated by the modernist theory that the New Testament presents an amalgamation in about equal parts of Hellenism with Judaism, as to be forced to find the Epistles full of inconsistencies which are not really there at all. That St. Paul (in general idea) and St. John found in the current Hellenistic Logos-doctrine a valuable vehicle for interpreting their message to the Gentile world is true; but that it was allowed to throw into confusion or fundamentally to alter the message, which they derived from the prophets of Israel and from the teaching of Jesus, and from the experience of the resurrection and the mission of the Spirit, seems to me to be quite untrue.

1. Dr. Scott will have it that Jesus Christ taught and thought and promised practically nothing concerning the Spirit. 'It had little or no place in the teaching of Jesus' (p. 81). 'Strictly speaking, the idea of the Spirit did not belong to the Gospel as proclaimed by Jesus, and in some ways brought an alien element into His religion' (p. 245). 'He may have felt that an idea like that of the Spirit removed God to a distance, or put an abstract power in place of Him' (p. 79). 'He may have felt it alien to His own religious temper' (p. 240). Thus the references in the Synoptists to the Holy Spirit in the teaching of Jesus are almost entirely declared to be unauthentic, and those in the fourth Gospel are declared to be quite unhistorical. The primitive faith in the Spirit as seen in the Acts is regarded as a reversion to Old Testament ideas under the influence of the new and exciting experience of divine power. Then the difference between the conception of the Spirit in the Acts and in St. Paul's Epistles (or St. John's) is, I think, exaggerated (see *The Holy Spirit and the Church*, p. 112, n. 2).

But all this leads on to a surprising theory that 'Paul and John with their conception of Christ Himself as an indwelling presence could find no real place for the Spirit' (p. 84). 'In Paul's interpretation of the Gospel there is no real place for the Spirit' (p. 184). 'Logically there is no place for it [the doctrine of the Spirit] in John's theology' (p. 206). Dr. Scott's explanation of these surely astonishing statements is that the whole idea of the new life in Christ—of Christ as an inward presence—was, perhaps unconsciously, borrowed from Hellenism, where the fundamental principle was the necessity of being reborn into a higher divine nature which is alien to our natural physical or bodily state; and that this Hellenistic idea, though it does not oust the Jewish doctrine of the Spirit consecrating and inspiring the whole life, yet leaves no room for it and is incompatible with it. 'It is clear that the conception with which the (fourth) Evangelist works is not the Christian one, but is bound up with those dualistic ideas which underlay Hellenistic speculation.' 'He starts from the Hellenistic idea of two different spheres of being (the material and sinful on the one hand, and the immaterial or divine on the other), and thinks of redemption as passing from one to the other' (p. 198). Scott describes this Evangelist—in terms which one might have hoped had been expelled from sound criticism and could now be regarded as quite antiquated—as 'belonging to that Gentile world to which the terms in which Jesus had taught were wholly foreign' (p. 204).

And Dr. Scott finds the same assimilation of an alien Hellenism in St. Paul, leading to the same inconsistency between the Christ-idea and the Spirit-idea (which needlessly duplicates it).

Now, I believe and have tried to show that the whole of this theory of a vast inconsistency running through

the fabric of St. Paul and St. John's theology is gratuitous. What you find in St. Paul is a doctrine about the heavenly Christ and the Spirit through whom He is communicated to the Church—the Spirit of the Father and His own Spirit—which involves at once 'personal' distinction between the Father and the Son and the Spirit, but also coinherence or profound inseparability. You find the same idea involved in the last discourses of our Lord as reported in the fourth Gospel. You have in fact in both St. Paul and St. John the doctrine of the Trinity by implication. Dr. Scott almost admits this finally. 'None the less the doctrine, as it afterwards developed, had its legitimate roots in New Testament theology.' It was 'involved in its teaching from the first' (pp. 236 f.). But there is no ground for this constant suggestion of a previous profound inconsistency in St. Paul and St. John. They were both subjects of an experience of Christ which had been found to involve a doctrine of the Incarnation of the Son, and a conviction of His resurrection, and ascension, and again of the continued presence of the glorified Christ by His Spirit in His Church, a conviction closely associated with Christ's own institution of the sacrament of His body and blood. This rich experience is expressed frequently in the Epistles—unsystematically no doubt—but it contained in itself the implication of the doctrine of the Trinity. I have tried in *Belief in Christ* to show how, if you show a reasonable confidence in the documents, the whole of the doctrine of Paul or the Hebrews or John requires nothing to account for it except (1) the root ideas of the Old Testament, (2) the teaching of Jesus, and (3) the experience of the resurrection and of the coming of the Spirit, which Jesus had promised. I have also tried to show that to find the grounds of the Pauline and Johannine idea of 'the extension of the Incarnation'—Christ as an inward

presence in 'His body the Church'—in contemporary Hellenism is gratuitous and contrary to the evidence. There is no such doctrine of a divine Saviour incarnate or of the perpetuation of such incarnation to be found in Hellenism—nothing like it.

2. Another associated inconsistency which Dr. Scott finds in St. Paul is also, I think, not really there. He thinks that St. Paul, following Philo, deeply assimilated the Hellenistic conception of the material flesh or body as evil and the source of evil, and that this was inconsistent with his Jewish tradition which he also retained (p. 185); and he strangely quotes, as justifying this attribution to St. Paul of the doctrine of matter as essentially evil, those startling expressions which St. Paul uses about the crucifixion of the flesh (p. 135). Do they not really prove the exact opposite? St. Paul says that 'they that are of Christ Jesus *have crucified the flesh*' (Gal. v. 24). The flesh, then, that they had crucified was not their *body as such*, which now had become the organ of the Spirit and was no longer carnal, but only the *body in a certain aspect*, as having been habituated to sin and been allowed to become the tyrant over the 'inner man.' I do not believe there is in St. Paul any real attribution of evil to matter or to the body as such; and therefore I find no inconsistency between his doctrine of the 'old man' and the 'new' and the glorious Jewish belief that everything that exists, though it be material, is in itself good and capable of redemption (see *The Holy Spirit and the Church*, p. 102). Surely also it is not the case that St. Paul (p. 163) 'declares the law not merely futile but mischievous.' True, 'the letter killeth'; but that was a *beneficent* function of the law. In his false life of ignorance man needed to be 'killed' in order to live; see Rom. vii. 12.

So, again (3), I think Dr. Scott is mistaken in seeking to find in St. Paul an esoteric gnosis, such as some of the

Hellenistic teachers professed, which could not be published to the outside world. St. Paul's favourite use of 'mystery' is for a divine secret *now revealed* and to be disclosed to all mankind. I think Dr. Scott quite unjustified when he says that St. Paul 'in his ordinary teaching dwells on the plain facts of the Gospel and kept its "mystery" in the background' and 'describes how among his more instructed converts (ἐν τοῖς τελείοις) he was accustomed to follow a method different from that of his more public teaching' (p. 173). The context shows that the contrast St. Paul draws is not between an inner and an outer circle of disciples, nor between a public Gospel and a private 'mystery,' but only between teaching suitable respectively to the less or the more advanced disciples—τέλειοι in the passage referred to (1 Cor. ii. 6–iii. 2) is opposed to νήπιοι.

Finally (4), we ought surely to decline to recognize any dissonance or contradiction between St. Paul's strong doctrine of the Church—the visible society—as the home and organ of the Spirit and his equally emphatic assertion of the indwelling of the Spirit in the individual. A true theory of human society, civil or religious, recognizes that the right sort of socialism strengthens and does not militate against the true individualism. It is quite untrue that, when St. Paul 'gives expression to his primary religious beliefs, he forgets that he is a member of the Church and falls back on the language of personal devotion' (pp. 124–5). Untrue again that 'in the same chapter [1 Cor. vi.] in which he makes the Church collectively the temple of the Spirit, he desires that each of his readers should himself be its temple' (p. 123). He does not desire it. He asserts that it is so. The gift of the Spirit given at a definite moment to each Christian both incorporated him into the Church and made his 'body the temple of the Holy Spirit.'

This is rooted in St. Paul's sacramentalism. Most of the foreign critics of to-day, and some of our own men who follow them, assert without hesitation that the catholic and sacramental conceptions are unmistakably to be found in St. Paul and St. Luke. On this subject Dr. Scott is vacillating himself or attributes vacillation to St. Paul and St. Luke. If he had frankly accepted this position of modern criticism, which I have tried to show is no more than the truth, he would not have had to give so unnatural an interpretation to some of the features of the New Testament. He would not have said that 'everything like organization was [at first] avoided as contrary to the inner nature of the Church,' though 'even in the first days several of the disciples, and especially Peter, seem to have taken on themselves [!] an informal leadership' (pp. 109–10); nor would he have been so perplexed by the scene described in Acts xix. 5, 6—the baptism in the Name of Jesus, and the confirmation by the laying on of hands, of the group of the Baptist's disciples. I feel really puzzled to know in what sense the Epistle to the Hebrews can be pronounced 'a typical product of the Catholic Christianity which was developing' (p. 222), in which the same would not have to be said of St. Paul's Epistles, or why the Pastoral Epistles should be said to illustrate 'the triumph of the ecclesiastical idea' (p. 229) more truly than the Acts, where Renan and Sabatier find it.

I cannot help feeling throughout as I read this book what an advantage it is, in freely and justly interpreting the New Testament, to start from the point of view of the Catholic Church; and, as I read sadly the concluding pages, I found myself wondering what Protestantism would come to, if it should finally cast off the beliefs in a final revelation and a religion of authority.

NOTE 17.—Neo-Platonism and the Monophysites.[1]

Neo-Platonism inside the Church, involving, as it did, a disparagement of matter and the senses, always tended to Monophysitism. There are some suggestive remarks in Duchesne's posthumous volume, *L'Église au VI^ème^ Siècle*, cap. v, in proof of this: 'C'est dans ce monde oriental [the schools of Alexandria, Berytus, Gaza, Antioch, Edessa] que viennent mourir les dernières lueurs de la philosophie hellénique; c'est sur les livres de dissidents chrétiens qu'elles projettent leurs derniers reflets.' This philosophy of the Monophysites 'conservait le fond de la doctrine traditionnelle [of Neo-Platonism], l'évolution de l'abstrait au concret, de l'un au multiple, du parfait à l'imparfait, et le rétablissement final par le retour de tous les êtres à l'unité primordiale.' It must never be forgotten that the writings of the Pseudo-Areopagite were deeply Monophysite in tendency, and that their attribution to St. Paul's disciple gave Monophysitism, in spite of the dogmas of the Fourth and Sixth Councils, a new chance even in the West. Thus the Monophysite tendency of Scotus Erigena is unmistakable; and the tendency is found also among writers of the Middle Ages less suspected of heresy than he. The Platonic tradition in its later form always tends to the disparagement of the actual and the material.

[1] An addition to p. 159, n. 1.

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